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Serpent and Dove

-:- -:- Or, -:- -:-

The Heiress of Hedstone Hall

By T. C. Harbaugh

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CHAPTER I.

THE SHADOW COMES.

LUCILLE reined in her spirited mount and took in the superb vista that lay before her. The morning was one of entrancing loveliness. A light fog like a silvery curtain overhung the lisping river, and beyond it she beheld the cotton fields with their fleecy bolls. She had ridden out from Hedstone Hall, one of the most ancient and beautiful of the homes of the South, endeared to her by memories which the years could not efface.

She was a bewitching girl, ample of figure, and captivating with her lustrous eyes of dark brown. One gloved hand held a silver-tipped whip of delicate design and the other rested lightly on the bridle rein.

"I trust he will not come," said Lucille, speaking aloud to herself. "I care not to see this man who is said to be on his way to the Hall. And why should he come? Tule is paradise. We are happy here, altho uncle is ailing still. If I had not glanced at the open letter on his table, I would not now be filled with apprehension. Why didn't I curb my curiosity? A woman's whim, no doubt. But what is that yonder?"

She started, for an object which had mounted the rise was moving toward her, a lumbering vehicle like the oldtime carriages of ante-bellum days, with a black man on the box and two sorrel horses in their harness. In a moment the carriage had vanished in a bend of the road, and the girl turned her horse's head and rode from the scene. The vehicle had taken the left-hand road which led to her home, Hedstone Hall.

Eager to forestall the new arrival, Lucille increased her pace, and at last, throwing the reins to a servant, bounded up the broad, lustrous steps of the Hall, and disappeared in the interior. At the head of the staircase which led to her chamber she stopped short to avoid a tall girl who was coming down. The beauty of Hedstone Hall drew aside to let her pass, but her footsteps had been heard.

"It is you, Lucille," said a sweet voice.

"Yes, Mona."

"I can smell the fragrance of the morning," was the reply. "I am going out to enjoy its beauties."

"All nature smiles," replied Lucille. "It is a perfect day."

"But what is in your voice, Lucille? Methinks it quavers."

Mona, the blind girl, waited for a reply, but none came. Lucille edged away and almost flew to her room. When she reached it she bounded across the carpet and drew the curtains aside. The carriage had stopped in front of the stately mansion.

Almost immediately the door of the vehicle was opened and a handsome man alighted. He cast a hurried glance at the house and tossed the driver a dollar to the obsequious coachman.

So far as Lucille could see the man had no luggage. He looked like a person of five and forty, and about him was a professional air which he did not attempt to conceal. She fell back as he mounted the steps, and for a moment stood like a statue in the middle of the room. It seemed to her that a serpent had invaded her Eden.

Half an hour later she heard her name called at the door. When she opened it a maid stood in the hall and was telling her that she was wanted in the library below.

"I'll come down," answered Lucille. "I have never kept uncle waiting," and when Nettie disappeared she looked at herself in the mirror and paced down the corridor.

"My niece, Doctor Burke," said the planter, who occupied an invalid's chair near a table.

Lucille had come face to face with the man who had alighted from the carriage.

"I am glad to meet one of your kin, Mr. Dalray," he said in musical tones. "She is Miss Lucille, is she not, the lady of whom you have spoken in your letters?"

"My dead sister's child," added Morgan Dalray, "and the light of Hedstone Hall."

Lucille flushed to the temples at this compliment, and her gaze sought the crimson roses in the vase at her feet.

"That is all for the present, dear," resumed the planter, addressing Lucille. "You will not be needed, so run along and by. He has come to put me on my feet again."

"I hope you speak truly, Uncle Morgan. I shall thank Doctor Burke from the bottom of my heart if he succeeds." And with this Lucille left the room.

"Beauty runs in your family, Dalray," spoke the newcomer, reluctantly removing his gaze from the door which the girl had passed. "Does she not inherit her mother's loveliness?"

"Sarah's loveliness and innate goodness!" replied the planter with enthusiasm. "I am glad you've come, doctor. You can study my case at first hand now."

As for Lucille, she had left the house and was flitting thru the spacious grounds, making for her favorite modern pergola which was overhung with flowering vines. There was a cloud on her beautiful face. Sweeping the vines aside, she entered the secluded retreat and threw herself upon a bench.

"That man of all men!" she exclaimed. "Why has fate sent him to Hedstone Hall? Has he not done enough harm already made? Am I to be bartered like a market commodity? I will see!"

A light footfall sounded the bower. Lucille turned her head and saw the [illegible] before her. She at once drew back into the shadows of the place and held her breath. Mona had reached up and was touching the yellow honeysuckles that hung in profusion above her head.

"Peril impends," said the sightless one in low tones. "I feel the cold breath of my soul. A shadow is coming to Hedstone Hall, and I shall feel its blight."

Lucille was on the eve of putting out her hand and drawing Mona to her, when the blind creature drew suddenly back.

"Some one is near me!" she exclaimed in notes of fear. "I feel the chill of conspiracy," and then Lucille sprang up and caught Mona's wrist.

"'Tis I, Lucille!" she said, in reassuring tones. "You have not invaded privacy, Mona," and she drew the frightened one toward her and seated her at her side. "Pardon me, but I could not help but hear your words. What is the shadow? Tell me, dear!"

The hand in Lucille's lap trembled like an aspen leaf.

"Who was in the carriage?" inquired Mona. "I heard the rumble of the wheels and——"

"It is a man whom Uncle Morgan called Doctor Burke."

"He was alone?"

"Yes, child."

"And you saw him?"

"At uncle's request I was introduced to Him in the library."

"What is he like?"

Lucille drew a portrait of the new arrival, and Mona listened with breathless attention.

"I shall stand by you, dear," and the arms of Mona found their way about Lucille's waist, and on her brow she felt the blind girl's kiss of fealty.

"What do you mean?" cried Lucille. "What is to happen that you say you will stand by me?"

"I cannot tell you," was the response. "I walk in darkness, but my soul sees. The blind have visions which those who have light never know. We have been happy in Hedstone Hall. It is the seat of our ancestors. It is the home of my childhood, and here for me the light went out just when I was beginning to see the wild flowers and to love the rippling brooks. This man——"

Mona broke her own sentence and unlaced her arms.

"Why do you not go on?" cried Lucille, impulsively. "What have you seen, Mona, dear? Tell me."

"Not now."

"But you will tell me?"

"In the future—perhaps."

A bird came to the velvet vines and began to carol a plaintive lay. Mona started to her feet and fled to the entrance.

"Why has he come?" Lucille heard her exclaim. "But you remember, dear, that Satan came to Eden and drove out all the happiness there."

"Yes, yes, Mona."

"And this Doctor Burke is the serpent!"

"But there is Hasketh!"

"The man for your love, Lucille!" cried the blind girl, clasping her hands. "Oh, my dear one, I played eavesdropper last night!"

"You, child?"

"Forgive me, Lucille." Mona came back to her and resumed her seat. "I couldn't help it. I was going out to breathe the fragrance of the dark. I had reached the foot of the stair, which, as you know, is at the library door."

"I know."

"Some one was with with your uncle. I heard voices in the room."

"My uncle's, no doubt?"

"I heard his voice, and the other was a strange one."

"Did you listen long?"

"As long as I dared."

"And you heard——?"

"I heard a plot conspiracy."

"The—compact?"

Lucille almost shrieked the words.

"The first sentence you fearful before the time," cried Mona. "I will go no further."

"You must, must, Mona." Lucille's tones were those of command.

"No, no! God pity us both!" and while the last word still trembled on the lips that breathed it, Mona fled and Lucille was alone.

CHAPTER II.

TERRIBLY ACCUSED.

YOU love me, Lucille?" In response to this fervid appeal the beauty of Hedstone Hall leaned forward and laid her hand softly upon the speaker's shoulder and gazed affectionately into his face.

"You do not doubt me?" she exclaimed.

"Why should I doubt, Sarah?" he only replied the planter. "You are willing to do anything for me?"

"Anything in the world!" and then she drew back as if half frightened by her own words.

"I'm glad to hear that, girl. You put new vigor into this old frame. I am going to live, Lucille."

"Thank Heaven!"

"And the new doctor," smiled Dalray. "Do you like him, Sarah? Speaking candidly?"

"I only know that it has baffled the most skilled of men."

"Have you ever thought that I have been slowly poisoned?"

Lucille's cheeks went as white as the foam of the sea.

"Poison?" she echoed, and the dreadful word seemed to still the heart that fluttered in her bosom. "You surely cannot mean it, uncle!"

"I would have put the awful suspicion from me, but Burke has put it there. I'd not want to think it, and never would if I have harbored such a thought if I had not had the proof."

"But, uncle——"

"I know it will be hard to convince you," broke in the planter, looking on the girl's face. "Doctor Burke is one of the most skilled toxicologists in the world. My malady was a puzzle to family doctor's comprehension, and yet Doctor Jessup is skilled in his profession. I sent for Doctor Burke as a last resort. But before I sent for him, child, I was forced to listen to certain proof that nearly turned me against all mankind."

Lucille was silent.

What proof had her uncle that some subtle poison was slowly sapping his life? And in Hedstone Hall, too. And whose hand had administered the fatal potions which had been checked by this dark-faced and handsome man who had come but a few hours? Lucille remembered the open letter which she had found on the library table, a letter with a Northern postmark, and she had stopped long enough to read the last page, telling that Doctor Burke would soon arrive at the Hall and would demand a wife for his skill in saving its master's life.

She now recalled how that letter had terrified her. It seared itself upon her brain, and when she saw the lumbering carriage rattling over the hills, she felt that her fate was at hand and that the man to whom she had pledged her love was to have a rival against whom he would wage a losing battle.

And what did Doctor Burke know about her? He had never crossed the threshold of Hedstone Hall; she had never heard of him till she read that flaring page with its demand. Did the letter really mean her? There was Mona, than whom there was no more beautiful woman in the Old South, but what would Doctor Burke want with a blind bride? She (Lucille) was the acknowledged heiress of the Hall, and Mona was its inmate only by sufferance. No, the letter could have but one meaning. If the new doctor saved the planter's life, she was to become his bride, tearing Hasketh Seaforth from her heart, and sealing her doom

He was skilled in his way, and his fame as a healer had circulated throut the district. It suddenly occurred to her that a visit to Ashboro might unearth something, and she resolved to go thither, late as it was, on a mission of discovery.

It was nearly ten o'clock when, partially disguised, Lucille slipped from the planter's mansion and betook herself toward the straggling town. She had not encountered Mona since the interview, nor did she care to come face to face with the blind girl.

It was a lonely road bordered with trees that rendered it still darker, but, nothing daunted, Lucille pursued her way, and presently came within the precincts of the village. The greater part of it was already asleep. A light glimmered in the one grocery in the middle of the town, and a few dogs, disturbed by her unceremonious entrance, snarled at her heels. At the end of the rambling street stood the little home and office occupied by Doctor Leo Dredge, and Lucille perceived a faint light in the latter structure.

It was her initial attempt in the role of spy, but she resolved to play out the game, even if danger came of it. There was too much at stake for her to draw back and give up the chase. A woman's will is one of the strongest things on earth, and she may be balked in her designs, but a resolute woman never.

Eager to look through the half-dropped curtains of Doctor Dredge's office, Lucille drew near and protected herself by a tree whose branches overhung the sidewalk, and it was a screen which the determined girl thankfully welcomed.

An old-fashioned lamp occupied the center of a small table in the room, and Lucille made out the forms of two men. One of these was Doctor Dredge, and the other the man who had come from the North, the one person who was to bring her a quick end of the shadows. Their heads were close together, as if some great purpose united them, and, to Lucille's mind, two more accomplished plotters had never sat face to face. But she had come to hear as well as to see, and in order to carry out her intent she crept up to the window, which was partly raised, and applied her ear to the crevice.

"There can be no failure," she heard Dredge say, in tones of self-laudation. "Of course, there's a risk, there always is in great movements, but nothing risked nothing won, you know, doctor."

"You're right, Dredge," was the reply. "I make it a point never to engage in wild-goose chases."

Doctor Dredge rubbed his thin hands gleefully.

"You see I made the suggestion as diplomatically as I could," he interposed. "I had to break the ground carefully, for I was on thin ice, but once I reached thicker I got along quite swimmingly."

"I found the ground pretty well prepared."

"And you were helped by the young fellow's flight?"

"Quite so."

A brief silence followed these words. "I left Dulray very determined," suddenly pursued the man from the North. "You've got the signal compact?"

"Just as if I would purposely destroy it!" chuckled Dredge.

"You are sure your agent made no mistake?"

"In all my career, both professional and private, I have never trusted the wrong man."

"That's good. And the letter?"

Dredge drew from his pocket a letter, which he threw upon the table. Doctor Burke picked it up and went thru it with his keen eyes.

"It's all right. The official can be trusted?" he asked, looking up into his companion's face.

"Absolutely. I have him under my thumb and he knows it."

"But will he look Seforth to the Hall?"

"Some deep design," was the reply. "I've had him watched for the last three months. He has made one more than one midnight journey thither."

Lucille's heart at this seemed to lose a pulsation.

"And your watch really saw him place something in Dulray's night glass?"

"Yes."

"Bless you, Dredge, that's nearly enough to hang him!" exclaimed Doctor Burke.

"Don't I know that?"

"If Dulray had died, there's no jury on the face of the earth that would not convict."

Leo Dredge laughed devilishly.

"But what means the flight? Do you think there is anything in the letter?"

"It's rather dark, don't you think?" and Dredge picked up the letter which the other had discarded.

"I don't know what the intended recipient would have thought," was the answer. "Love is blind, you know."

"But occasionally it sees, despite its alleged affliction," smiled the man from the North.

"Oh, well, it never reached its destination."

Lucille was grasping the scanty window-sill in her efforts to remain calm.

"I guess that's all for tonight," remarked Doctor Burke. "All goes swimmingly. I shall go back to the Hall tomorrow and take personal charge of my patient."

As he arose and adjusted his coat, the girl drew back and trembled under the leafy boughs. She did not wait until the door opened to let Burke out, but hurriedly glided away, her heart in her throat, and her face white as the moonlight that bathed Ashboro in silver.

To return to Hedstone Hall and seek her couch, where she could calmly dissect the meaning of what she had heard, was now her purpose. She was soon flying up the street. She was still in the heart of the untidy thorofare when a door opened and a man came out upon a narrow porch. Lucille hastily placed herself in the protecting shadow of another tree.

The postmaster of Ashboro leaned against a column and coolly lit a briar pipe. It was evident that he was going to enjoy a moonlight smoke before he retired.

Phineas Caldwell was the oracle of the town. He had held his office for years, despite the fact that some time before rumors of embezzlement on his part had filled the air. Truth to tell, there was not much to embezzle in the Ashboro postoffice, but rumor had whispered, just the same, and Lucille remembered that wagging tongues had suddenly grown still and that Phineas Caldwell had not been publicly investigated.

While she regarded the smoker on the little veranda she recurred to the letter which Dredge had shown to Doctor Burke. Was it not an intercepted letter? Might not Hasketh have written her telling of his sudden departure? If so, she had never received the information, and there was but one place where it could have been stopped—the Ashboro postoffice.

"I wonder, Phineas Caldwell," thought Lucille, "if you are the man who is under Leo Dredge's thumb? If I thought you were I'd know it now or never."

She took an impulsive step forward, but checked herself, and the next moment the postmaster knocked the ashes from his briarwood and turned into the house.

"I have him under my thumb."

CHAPTER IV.
IN THE MOONLIGHT.

THE afternoon after Lucille's adventures in Ashboro, Doctor Burke walked up the steps of the Hall and entered the place. There was an air of triumph about him, but he came to a sudden halt when the servant had closed the door behind him. Midway on the stair stood Mona, the blind.

Her deep eyes showed no sign of her affliction. They were rich and darkly ripe, and the doctor looked at her with a puzzled expression. When he had recovered somewhat from his surprise, he turned into the library and found his patient awaiting him.

"I discover," remarked Burke, after a few commonplace observations, "that I am not yet acquainted with all the inmates of Hedstone Hall."

"My family is quite small, doctor. Lucille and I constitute it and——"

"But surely it was not Miss Lucille whom I saw on the stairway."

"No?"

"Miss Lucille is a brunette, but the person whom I encountered is a golden blonde."

A smile rippled over Dalray's countenance.

"Then you must have seen Mona," said he.

"I doubt it not, for she was not Miss Lucille."

"Mona," proceeded the planter, "has been an inmate of the Hall for years, but I never reckon her when I refer to the family."

"A guest, perhaps?"

"A girl with an affliction. Mona has been blind from her early childhood."

"With these wonderful eyes!" exclaimed Doctor Burke. "I can hardly believe it."

"She came into our life here as a foundling. Of her history I know almost nothing. She was taken in as a playmate for Lucille, and being of my niece's age, she has become a permanent fixture. I have repeatedly offered to place her in the hands of expert oculists, hoping that her blindness would yield to treatment, but, strange to say, the girl prefers to remain sightless."

"She is one in a million," smiled the doctor. "Think you that, after all, she may not see?"

"She is absolutely blind," answered Dalray, with emphasis. "I have secretly tested her on numerous occasions, and have fully satisfied myself on this score."

"But she must have wonderful use of her other faculties."

"She has. She goes everywhere, and her intuition is marvelous."

"I must see more of this girl," said Burke.

"You doubtless will."

"One thing I noticed, and that is that, but for hair and complexion she is almost the counterfeit presentment of Miss Lucille."

"The two girls are wonderfully alike. In disposition, however, they are radically different. Lucille has a temper, whereas, on the other hand, Mona is as placid as a summer lake. The two are inseparables, and both have brought sunshine into the Hall."

At this moment from somewhere beyond the house came an outburst of song, a weird Spanish refrain, to which Doctor Burke listened as one entranced.

"Miss Lucille," said he, "has a beautiful voice."

"That is Mona singing," corrected the planter. "She is as musical as a bird."

The plotter went to the window, and, drawing the curtains aside, looked out upon the lawn. Under a wide-spreading magnolia stood Mona, with the grace of a Nielsen, singing the favorite stanzas which she loved. Now her tones rose in lofty cadence, and now sank like the far-off music of a woodland brook, and all the time the listener stirred not.

Suddenly he dropped the curtain and came back to his patient.

"We are getting the poison out of your system," said he. "Before long the master of Hedstone Hall will be a new man."

"Thanks to your wonderful skill," exclaimed Dalray. "What news have you of the fugitive?"

"I have no additional news of him. Self-branded, he has fled to parts unknown, and will hereafter keep his distance."

"He would better," snapped the planter. "Have you analyzed the dregs in the night glass which I placed in your hands?"

"Only hastily, but there is no need of an elaborate analysis. The fellow was using minute quantities of curare."

"And pray, doctor, what is curare?"

"It is a deadly poison used by the savages of the Amazonian valley. It kills almost instantly, or lets the victim languish at the will of the criminal."

"Monstrous!"

"The fellow must have had an opportunity which he embraced."

"And a terrible design. I shudder to think what might Lucille has escaped. But let us to brighter subjects, doctor. Your fee, as proposed in your letter, meets my approval. Lucille will become your wife if you bring me out of the shadows."

"Then," smiled Doctor Burke, with the subtlety of the serpent he was, "I may consider myself one of the happiest of mortals."

Night had thrown her starry curtain over the land when the conversation ceased, and Burke, taking his hat, announced that he would stroll thru the grounds for the purpose of viewing them by moonlight.

Dalray settled back in his chair and closed his eyes. Already he felt new vigor in his blood. He was getting away from the Unknown; his feet no longer touched the waters of Lethe, and he argued that many years of life were yet to lengthen out his span.

Doctor Burke passed thru the grove which fronted the mansion, and heard his steps toward a small stream which rippled just beyond its outer edge. The night was wonderfully clear. A soft breeze scented by a profusion of blossoms pleasantly assailed him, and for some time he stood on the bank of the water course.

Suddenly a boat shot out from the opposite bank and approached him. Instantly he drew back into the shade of a tree and waited the event. It came obliquely across the stream and grounded not far from his station.

A man stepped out and moored the canoe to an overhanging limb. He was a little man, dressed in common garb, one of the poorer denizens of the region, and he carried in one hand a single-barreled rifle which seemed the worse for wear.

A poacher!" thought the doctor, as he studied the man. "There are pheasants on the place, and the fellow is after a stolen meal. When I am master here I will make quick work of this sort of gentry."

Eager to see if the stranger was the sort of man he had called him, Doctor Burke glided after him, keeping him in sight by aid of the moonlight.

Presently he came to a sudden halt and held his breath. There had stepped out from some bushes a figure at sight of which his heart seemed to stand still.

"What's this?" he soliloquized. "What does Miss Lucille mean by meeting this night hawk?"

There was no mistaking the identity of the person who had stepped into the man's path. Lucille's face was partly concealed by a shawl, but the facial figure was enough to disclose her personality. She held out her hand to the man, and then they walked into the deeper shades. The man from the North leaned forward and listened with all ears.

"I'm glad you've come," he heard Lucille say. "Is it really true?"

"That he is gone?" was the reply.

"Yes, yes!"

"He's gone good enough; went off without so much as a good-by. But you ought to know. You got his letter?"

"I got no letter!" cried Lucille, clasping her hands on her bosom.

"Thunder!" exclaimed the man. "I lost it."

"You, Noah?"

"With my own hands! You should have gotten it all right."

"But I didn't, I am."

The little man gave a low whistle of astonishment.

"Well," cried he, "it beats my time. Dan brings the mail from the postoffice, doesn't he?"

"Twice a day."

(Continued on page 8.)

Down With His Ship

:-: Or, :-:

The White Creeper

By William H. Manning

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CHAPTER V.

MORNING showed a clear sea with the rippling water sparkling under the touch of a benign sun. The Shooting Light was holding her course as if nothing had occurred, but the inboard region told another tale. The four unwelcome Malay sailors necessarily had the privilege of the forecastle, the output of the galley and the deck space forward, and the conditions below had been greatly altered.

Roger had slept the last part of the night out comfortably, but he was early in getting word with Porgera. That woman proved to possess a good face, and the diver took to her greatly. This was well, for a woman's help was now needed in the brigantine, with a mind-stricken girl aboard.

From Porgera he had more details of the finding of the girl, but the most that could be told was but little. The On-We-Go had been pursuing her course uneventfully until a drifting boat was sighted. Captain Mosco was not one to turn a blind eye to what had financial value, and the schooner ran near.

Hagar was found lying under the thwarts, unconscious, and had been taken aboard, but her troubled mind had never enabled her to give her history. Oblivion lay back of her.

Who was she, and why had she been alone? The questions arose, but there was no way of answering them. Alert Porgera had searched her clothing, but no name and no clew were there.

The mysteries of the sea are many, and its tragedies will never cease until the world goes out in chaos, but there was something so pathetic and mind-harrowing in the idea of the one occupant of the tiny boat in the vast Pacific that no normal person could fail to give keen sympathy and be wrapped in great wonder.

All the forenoon Hagar was, by Porgera's report, sleeping, but a surprise came at noon. Answering the summons of George Wash Cookee, the combination Chinese cook and steward, Captain Hardy and Roger had seated themselves at the table, when the stateroom door unclosed and the sea waif walked out, only slightly supported by Porgera.

She looked at the men, smiling slightly, and they sprang to their feet. The skipper's first impression was that she had recovered more than bodily activity, and his face became sunshiny.

"I am glad to see you astir," he said, "I am rejoiced to see you astir."

Her smile widened a trifle, and she nodded pleasantly.

"I trust," he added, "that you are feeling comfortable."

"Oh I am quite well," she returned, in a voice of unusual melody. "I have been a little wearied by walking so much in the desert, but it cheers one greatly to have happened on a ship so satisfying as yours. I should hardly expect you to have many customers in such a place, but I find my quarters comfortable. I forget whether I signed the register when I arrived with my servant, but my name is Hagar."

Hardy stared blankly, and then shifted his gaze to Porgera's face. That woman tapped her forehead in the usual way.

"Everything is all right, madam," said Hardy, trying to subdue his uneasiness. "Yes, and I trust you like it here. Have you come from far?"

"All in all, yes; but we are making a tour of the desert, and consequently we are slight from day to day. Really, Mr. Landlord, your dinner looks attractively appetising. I will sit at once."

She hesitated at the chair she was to take, but the bewildered captain indicated that opposite to his own, and she sank into place. The movements were hardly robust, but there was no great weakness. The captain and Roger took places, and Porgera stationed herself behind her charge's chair.

The diver stole secret glances at the central figure of the group. She did not seem to be more than 20 years old, and her face was both pretty and refined. The latter was a quality never seen except in one of good blood, and her evident rank in life made her case all the more appealing.

Hardy say that she was properly supplied with food, and then tried to continue the conversation. Being a blunt man of experience never connected with a case like hers, he did not find it easy.

"Are you traveling far?" he asked stupidly.

"Until I have thoroly seen the desert," she replied, smiling again.

"Ah! Do you ever find your journey disagreeable?"

"Never! The people of the desert are very kind souls."

"Have you met with any adventure?"

"Not one. Only perfect peace."

The captain looked at Roger in a helpless way, and that man tried his luck at conversation.

"I've always understood," he said, "that the desert was a place where food was hard to get."

"Quite the contrary," Hagar asserted. "It is naturally a very fertile tract—its name implies that, you know—or perhaps you don't know that."

She held her fork suspended in air and surveyed him critically.

"You are young," she added, "which explains your mistaken idea. Nothing will age and experience can bring wisdom. Before 40—that is my own age—the human brain is undeveloped and crude. Years have given me knowledge, but you—you are very young."

For no reason whatever Roger felt the blood rising to his cheeks. The poor woman was as well-meaning as any one could be, and her words came from a gentle mind, but, somehow, the diver felt more than ever that he was young, and that youth meant feebleness of judgment, but

"Youth," she added pleasantly, "is not a crime."

"I hope," said Hardy, clutching desperately at words, "that your travels have not brought you within sight of crime?"

"Never, sir."

"Nor suffering?"

"And never suffering."

The captain crammed a big bite of chicken into his mouth and again looked at Roger. He had entertained various women at his table, and these had ranged from young to old and from agreeable to repulsive, but all had possessed worldly life. He did not know how to entertain this waif of the seas, but his deepest pity had gone out to her, and he intended to do all in his power to guard her as a father might a child. She was the gift of the sea, and her affliction made her an object for manly tenderness.

"I'll look after her," he mused, "and when we get back to San Francisco I'll see her well cared for——"

His plan stopped short. When Starvation Cove was reached he would attach a weight to his feet and sink down to death beside the wreck. After that he had no ward, no guardian, but he felt that Roger and Viiper would carry out his instructions fully. He intended that this waif should be properly cared for, and ultimately restored to reason and to her friends.

By the captain's mind was finished the girl's strength began to lag, and she did not object to Porgera's suggestion that she should rest before making further exertions.

"I trust," she said to Captain Hardy, "that you will not consider myself removal from your excellent sitting-room, but a recent long journey by camel has impaired my physical powers a trifle, I fear."

"Pray take your rest, madam," the skipper answered courteously.

She went, attended by the Malay woman, and then Hardy motioned to Roger and Porgera to follow.

"A sad case!" he murmured. "It is pitiful to see anybody deprived of reason, but to see one so young——" What frightful experience has been responsible for this condition?"

"Ask Heaven," the diver replied.

"Perhaps you should say, sa't man. The sea, smiling when the mood is on, is a hungry monster when it is cruel, but evil men are never less than terrible. She has been victim of more than ordinary wreck. Her ship scarcely she was found by Captain Mosco."

"That opens up a wide field of conjecture."

"Very large and very tragic. And she so young! A mere child. Not more than 18 or 20. Just about the age of my grandchild, Perdita. I think I feel the more pity for this child because I am turning my thoughts so much to Persis. I will question Mosco."

They had paused at the head of the companionway, and now the captain suddenly turned upon his associate.

"What," he asked, "is your opinion of the Malays?"

"It is early to decide, and I suppose we are all prejudiced when judging the people of foreign nations that we regard as uncivilized, but I feel no great admiration for our Malay additions."

"Same with me. Except for the fact that Porgera is such a good soul, I should be inclined to consider whether these men are not guilty as to Hagar, but that we can hardly suspect. I'm sorry the Malays are here, tho. They'll be complicate trouble."

He was thinking of what he was to do when he reached the wreck of the Riding Brave, and beset with fear that the men from the Philippines would not be easy to manage in some crises.

"I think we must acquit them of injustice to Hagar."

"That much, yes. By the way, that's an odd notion of hers that she is 40 years old, one of her few delusions. Yes, and the you are three or four years older than she, it is her fancy to rank you as distinctly young. That's one on you, Cooper."

The captain broke into a hearty laugh, and Roger joined him.

"Decidedly queer, sir, and, do you know, she gave me a feeling that I was really less young than much. I've knocked about all my life and thought I was past diffidence and the sensitive sentiments, but when she spoke so young and green as spring leaves on a tree"

"To us it was comical, but the tragedy of it is strange. Think her delusion that she is traveling on a desert. That was the way of the Hagar of the Bible, and thus far the girl lives up to the name she has appropriated. Her history, it seems to go no further. She does not mention any of the other Biblical personages connected with the original Hagar. Ah! here comes Mosco. Wonder what he wants."

CHAPTER VI.

THE Malay arrived with his usual smile and show of teeth, and Roger was impressed with the belief that the master of the late On-We-Go probably was not a bad fellow. Giving him that credit, mingled with the diver offered ultimate judgment. Mosco nodded amiably.

"Sir," he said to Captain Hardy, "no doubt you deal with four dozen men many, but we try to do our duty in humble way. We all good sailormans. We sign ship's articles if you wish, right away."

"What will I do wish," Hardy returned dryly. "I've men enough of my own. I shall set you aboard the first ship we speak."

The captain hesitated over his reply, and then replied affirmatively.

"Maybe we pick some need us," Mosco pursued sweetly. "Not all good ships over there," and he pointed beyond the bows. "Ever hear of the White Creeper?"

"No." What's that?"

"A pirate, sir."

"Oh!" the skipper growled indifferently. "Well, I've sailed these waters for 20 and more years, and such a small thing as a pirate doesn't trouble me. The islands we are heading for are full of them. They keep four pirates. All that's necessary is to take them and cuff their ears and tell them to quit."

"That no do with the White Creeper, sir," and the Malay shook his head solemnly. "He fellow not like other pirates. He carries bad men and guns, and is cunning as a wizard, and he has done lots of harm. He has been out months. Many honest men sleep dead in the ocean who would be alive if that low-lying white schooner was not afloat."

"What kind of a schooner did you say?" Roger broke in quickly.

"Him built different from most. Long, low, painted gray, slender masts, very fast. We call White Creeper because he slips along so easy and is so—what you say?—inconspicuous. Can't be seen until he's very near, and by that time his bad gun shoots the honest vessel all to pieces and its sailorfolks are soon killed."

"You give the fellow a tough reputation, but I'll defy him."

"But if we men sign the articles——"

"Thank you, Captain Mosco, and it's kind of you, but I'll take on no more articled men. Room here you are welcome to, and good usage, until we can transship you."

The Malay received the adverse decision pleasantly, and moved away.

"Pirates!" Hardy commented. "Bosh!"

"Do you know, sir," Roger replied, "that I think the White Creeper is in these waters now?"

"Why do you think that?" was the wondering reply.

"Because I've seen a long, low, gray schooner that just fits in with the Malay's description. I mentally gave her the name of the Gray Ghost, for that's what she looked like to me, but I'll swap that title off for Mosco's improvement. I think the White Creeper is near us."

He added a full account of the schooner he had seen tagging after the brigantine, and Hardy listened with close attention. He was not rash, and the fact that he had admitted the Malay's story did not banish the fact that the Pacific had pirates, and that they were seamates not to be despised.

The Shooting Light carried only small arms, and if the White Creeper trained a big gun on them it would be a serious matter.

"This is a fast ship," the skipper added, "and you say you think the schooner faster?"

"Yes, she seemed to me like a wonder for speed."

"I'll instruct the men and have them keep a sharp watch. If we sight that craft early years it will be well to try and shake her off. Still, we need not trouble ourselves seriously. Natives of islands in the sea are ahead of us take to piracy like fish to water, and we have them with us always. One more menace counts one more."

They turned to work indifferently, and the subject was dropped.

The day wore off, the brigantine stood her course in the Malay's easterne wind, the sea lifted lightly off her hull with a diamond-like glitter at the crest of each wet wavelet, and no sail was in sight to raise a speck on the horizon that might possibly be another ship. For the time the White Creeper was out of sight.

In the afternoon Hagar came on deck supported by Porgera. She still lacked full measure of strength, but was in fairly good physical condition, and her countenance was natural that it was hard until she spoke to realize that her mind was afflicted. She paused at the rail to gaze attentively, but Roger hastened to her side.

"Pray take this chair," he said solicitously. "You are still weak and, at the same time, be free from overexertion."

"Oh, I need no such support," she replied, smiling. "It is true that I am a woman, and it's supposed they lack muscular force, but I do not need sympity to me. My endurance is wonderful, and even when making a long day's journey on the desert my powers never fail me. My strength is really remarkable, Mr. Cooper. How I love it!"

She waved a trim hand toward the lifting sea, and deep pity fell upon Roger. She was so young, and it was painful to see her realize that the ocean looked to her like the sands of the desert.

"It is—as—wide," he returned stupidly.

"Wide, grand, free!" she exclaimed with exultation. "Notice how it lies in yellow glory. Its surface moves, lifts, turns and nods as the gentle breeze touches it. From here it looks as nogo been likened to the sea, and there surely is some resemblance. If we call the lifting of a small yonder a wave it the illusion in full. Do you not find it so, sirs?"

Captain Hardy had approached, and both he and Roger expressed agreement with her idea.

"Quite a companionity!" she pursued.

"Look as far as you will in any direction and the desert sands may be seen. Yes, it is immensity and we are but pygmies on its surface. What are we? Merely a caravan wagon, drawn by camels, plodding our way. We are insignificant."

She looked at her men companions, who maintained dull assent.

"Do you like the sea?" asked Roger.

"It is queer in a great traveler like me, that I have never seen the sea," she answered, smilingly. "Sometimes I think I would be afraid of it. The sea is wet, with water that runs very high. I once read that one man was drowned in the sea."

"Do you think it more dangerous than the desert?" Roger asked.

"Do I? Sir, your youth and inexperience speak there. At my age, if you live to reach such years, you will have no doubts. Still, it is pleasing to find a modest young person, one who does not think he knows everything. It is well that you ask older persons like me for information, for at your age the brain is so undeveloped that only willingness to learn can lift a youth out of emptiness."

Serious as Captain Hardy was finding life, his sense of humor remained, and he smiled amusedly at the diver.

Altho he could hardly comprehend why Roger should be worried at being classed as everyone, it was diverting to notice how seriously he was taking the afflicted girl's odd fancy.

She remained on deck for a considerable time, and occasionally returned to her mention of outlying sand, but was finally persuaded by Porgera to go below and rest.

"I've an idea," Hardy then said with emphasis.

"About Hagar?" the diver asked.

"Yes. When this ship fetches back to San Francisco she will be friendless and unknown, and she will need help. By that time my grandchild, Persis, will have arrived in the city, and my idea is that she shall take care of this girl. True, I've not seen Persis since she was a mere child, but I assume she is a young woman of good judgment. Now, Hagar must be Persis' ward. The one girl must protect the other until we can learn who this waif of the sea really is."

"That's a large-hearted idea, sir," Roger replied.

"Anyhow, my granddaughter shall be guardian of Hagar. I'll see to it as soon as we get to any port."

He stopped short, remembering that he was to commit suicide when the wreck of the Shooting Light was located near Starvation Reefs.

"Cooper," he added hastily, "you'll do your part to forward my plan, will you not?"

"I certainly will, sir!" the young man replied eagerly.

"Good! I rely upon you to do so."

At that moment one of the sailors approached Hardy.

"May I have a word with you, sir?" he asked.

"Certainly, Peter. What is it?"

"I've just found this thing tucked into a niche in the forecastle."

He held an object indicated, which was a small bag.

"I don't know what it is," he added. "Looks like sealskin, but it's much softer. My guess is that it's a native product from the membrane of a fish or animal, well tanned, but treated in some queer way. Look inside! You'll see it's partly filled with down of some kind. I call it odd."

"A small bag of a sort unknown to me," Hardy carelessly replied. "Probably a native contraption, as you suggest. An oddity, sure enough."

"I was going to ask my mates which one owned it, but you see, there was more to it. This note was inside. A slip of paper nestling among the down. Just read that, sir."

He was speaking with gravity, his expression worried, and he had aroused enough interest so that the two listeners read together:

"We are near. Will keep near all along. Will get speech with you when the time is reached, but don't think of making plans for exploding the powder until I have further word with you. Have made a slight but important change in my plans. Wait until you see me. To use the powder so well concealed as to be safe from Hardy's prying eyes?"

The captain looked up with a puzzled expression on his face.

"What the dickens does this mean?" he asked.

"Sir," Peter exclaimed, "we've got dynamite or some sort of explosive threatening us this night."

"Where do you say you found this?"

"In among some litter that was back of my own cot, sir. The cook hid it, but I was poking for my knife, that dropped that way, so I come upon this. When we sailed from Frisco there was no ruffle here and no bag, neither. Now, what I want to know is, how did this get here? Write to me, sir. Prince nobody would take this mighty queer way of delivering a letter, for it would be crazy. But how has it got aboard of us?"

"What's this half-unreadable name at the foot of the note?" asked the captain, ignoring the sailor.

"Water has dropped on it," Roger answered. "It's blotted. I—I have it, sir. The note is signed 'Bragon.'"

Hardy turned the paper over and looked at it in all parts.

"This," he finally said, "would be a very startling matter if we took it seriously, but how can we? True, it mentions a wreck and we are going that way, but how could this thing be flung aboard of us after we left port? It's absurd."

Roger started. He suddenly remembered that, when the Gray Ghost ran so close aboard the brigantine in the fog, he had heard a soft sound hard by that, somehow, reminded him of the noise of a dropping football. Now, the matter assumed new import.

Did the captain of the Gray Ghost have evil designs on the brigantine, and had he secretly communicated with a confederate on the Shooting Light? If so, who was the confederate?

CHAPTER VII.

ROGER had not remembered to tell the captain about the soft sound on the deck when the Gray Ghost slid by in the fog, but he promptly did so now.

"That sound," he concluded, "might have been made by flinging this bag from the schooner to the brigantine. If there was a small weight inside to give carrying power to the thing, a smart fling would do it, and the down in the bag would deaden the noise of its fall. I guess is that this object came aboard then."

Hardy eyed his companion with doubt and disapproval.

"This looks over-dreamlike to me," he replied, after a pause. "I've sailed the seas many years, and never heard of such a matter before. Of course, I must believe you are right when you say that gray schooner ran close to us, but for them to fling this bag aboard—is that reasonable?"

"But if it wasn't done in that way, how was it done?"

"If it was important enough to deliver a letter so that all trouble was taken, why didn't the traitor, if we have one, destroy the telltale writing before now?"

"I've been thinking about that, sir," Roger answered, "and I've got to believe more than the letter was intended this way. I can only surmise that the pirate's confederate took out the other object, but missed finding the note."

"If there's mischief afoot, why didn't he fling this bag into the sea as soon as he had emptied it of its contents?"

"I can't give even a guess as to that."

"This matter irritates me," Hardy admitted curtly. "I am not accustomed to any such folderol. I've sailed the seas many a year, and seen some mysteries mixed in with mutiny, wreck and fire, but never a goldarned surmise of this sort before. I can't believe in it, but with human lives in my keeping I've got to use due precautions. Cooper, will you do me a favor?"

"Certainly, sir."

"If, by one chance in a thousand, it's true that we have a dangerous explosive in the brigantine, it must be found and flung overboard. I'll ask the making a thoro search in all quarters. I'll not trust the work even to Vilper, but use my own eyes. Do you accompany me?"

"Gladly!" Roger replied quickly.

They searched, and tried to do a minute investigation, but "it was over they were no wiser than before. Nothing suspicious was found.

"I didn't expect to find anything," said Hardy, smiling sarcastically. "An explosive aboard! Nonsense!"

"If there is a traitor here," the diver replied, "who is he?"

"There is none. Yet, your question merits consideration. The Malays did not come until after this matter seemed to appear, so we must leave them out of the question. Besides that, we have Mate Vilper, six hands before the mast, the cook and ourselves. Can you pick an ally for the pirate out of that list?"

Hardy grew even more sarcastic, but Roger was not easily disarmed of suspicion.

"How much do you know about Vilper?" he asked.

"I know him to be an honest, capable sailor, but otherwise a stupid man."

"You don't doubt him?"

"Not a bit."

"And your sailors——"

"Strangers to me until we sailed, but men well recommended. They are a likely lot, and I could almost stake my life on their fidelity. No traitor in treachery among them. We have got into a flurry over a little down-filled bag——"

"What about the note inside of it?"

"The note? Well, the note"—Hardy paused and rubbed his forehead in perplexity—"hanged if I know, Cooper! Was it only somebody's bad joke? Common sense says that was it, and I hope that's all. If so, we've been fools."

Happening to catch sight of Mosco, the captain called to him. The Malay came, pleasant as ever.

"What," Hardy asked, "is the name of that pirate who sails the White Creeper—the chief?"

"Men say he is called Bragon."

"That's all, Mosco, and you may go. Thank you!"

The man went, and Hardy nodded.

"I expected that," he added to Roger. "That's the name the note was signed to, or's and he wrote the note. Neither was in this ship until he came."

"But the schooner could slide past us, and there was a little sound on our deck as if something was thrown aboard of us, and——"

"There, there, Cooper! Don't say a word more. Logic shows that our suspicions are ridiculous, and also that they are well-founded. Can you account for such a condition? I can't, and I'm going to rest from trying. Oblige me by helping to watch every soul who is with us, and we'll see if either of us can get at the truth. Let it go at that for now. I know I'm not sleepy."

The captain walked away, and a flush rose to Roger's face. He had reasons for thinking this tribute to his reliability misplaced. Lem Soper had made no mistake when, earlier, he charged Roger with being in the brigantine for a hidden purpose. That young man had more interest in the enterprise than going down as a diver to explore for the bones of the lost Riding Brave. Being aboard he had taken pains to win Captain Hardy's good opinion, but he was not so thick-skinned that he could hear praise without being conscience-smitten.

The next three days were uneventful. The Shooting Light held her course with a favorable wind that sent her handsomely on her way. Most of the time the sails bellied stiffly, but there was little need for shifting canvas, and it became a foreman joke that the hands were forgetting how to pull ropes, handle reefs, and lay out on the yards.

During this time Hagar was the central figure. On deck and in cabin she always had ample attention, and Hardy and Roger studied hard how to arouse her sleeping mind. Various devices were tried, but all failed.

In her deranged estimation she was a woman of 40 years, the outlying sea was a sandy desert, and the ship was a wagon drawn by camels. Nobody had the heart to try by blunt speech to show her how wild her fancies were, but, rather, pity led the men to come dangerously near to abetting her delusions.

The captain was thinking a good deal on one of his pet hands, and, having loned it down somewhat for her ears, he finally broke the ice.

"Madam Hagar," he began, "I have a granddaughter."

"I now respect you even more than before," she replied solemnly.

"She lived in Japan, but is now on the seas, bound for San Francisco."

"To meet you on your return?"

"That's it. To be there when the brigantine makes port again."

"Has she been away from you long?"

"Many years. Her father does business in Japan. Why, ma'am, I've not seen Persis since she was a small child."

"Persis! Is that her name?"

"Yes."

"An old-fashioned name, but rather taking. No doubt, being your grandchild, she must be a delightful girl."

"She must, for she was a delightful child. Now, ma'am, I look forward to seeing you meet her. I hope you and she will be great friends."

"I'm sure we shall," agreed Hagar, readily.

"Just like sisters—eh?"

"Why, I would be capital."

"Then, from this time, we will consider Persis your sister."

"Let it be so, my dear captain. Perhaps when this caravan gets to the city you named—San Francisco, did you say?—and all hands have rested, Persis and I will take a journey across the desert together."

The subject was enlarged upon, for Hardy was so anxious to safeguard the future of his unfortunate charge that he wanted to force the idea firmly into her mind that she was to find a friend and safe companion in Persis, and have to some sane, reliable person to look for help when the home port was made again. After that, Hagar was not allowed to forget, and, accepting the situation, she often mentioned "Sister Persis."

On a later evening, when Roger came on deck, the captain beckoned to him.

"Given these winds we shall make Starvation Reefs thirty-six hours later," he announced.

"And then?"

"Then you don your diver's suit and go down to the wreck of the Riding Brave."

"I've never asked you," Roger began haltingly, "just what you wanted to recover——"

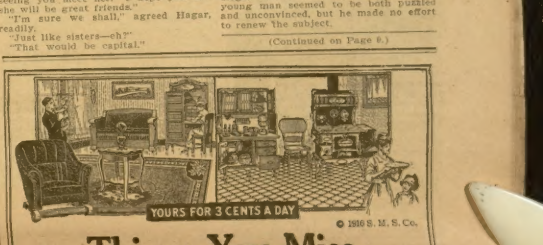
"Whatever was left in the cabin and stateroom that was of value. The ship's papers were lost, and the log book left behind. Besides that, I had some private papers of my own that were in my wedgeboard safe, but, with that, being inside the safe, I think they have escaped ruin from water."

"Men who look for wrecks in this way usually want to recover money or jewels."

"There are no jewels in the Riding Brave, and, except for perhaps twenty dollars in the safe, probably not a dollar that is not rendered by the pulp water. The money value of the wreck is less than the cost of sailing this vessel one day."

Hardy walked away abruptly, but Roger looked after him sharply. The young man was not at all easy puzzled and unconvinced, but he made no effort to renew the subject.

(Continued on Page 6.)



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CHAPTER VII.

THE BATTLE.

TO MAJOR TRIESTA, with his little code book, the passport read: "To any officer or private of Carabeo's 6. Irregular people, this words in brackets were to be left out of the acrostic, and that the acrostic was to begin with the first capital letter within the body of the message.

"Senor," began Rivas, "take the lady to a room and have her searched," began the henpecked Major.

"What!"

The Spanish beauty's hand flashed toward her bosom. But at that moment the black-bearded giant, Trabajar, who had tiptoed into the hall, seized her ungallantly and held her arms down to her sides.

"Sergeant, call Senora Nixthimal, and have her come and search this woman chorus!" commanded Captain Trabajar, taking the authority out of the hands of his superior.

And while he stood there holding Ysabel all too close to him and all too firmly, Senora Nixthimal, who proved to be an old Yaqui squaw, grizzly, grouchy and good-natured, came waddling into the room. She thrust her hand into the girl's bosom and drew forth an automatic. Then she made a second excursion and discovered a beautiful Spanish stiletto.

"Search in my hair," said the girl, "and you will find a note. There, feel for it, yes, there. It is a note, so you folks not to mur—murder my father. It at least, is genuine, I hope."

The old Yaqui squaw handed the note to the Major.

"Yes," said the Major, "yes, this is genuine." Then he spoke to "Blackbeard" instead of to the repulsed, weeping girl.

"Yes," grunted Trabajar, "but I don't have to take my orders from a dippy fool like Gonzalmo. I take most of mine only from Colonel Carabeo."

"Oh, no," she cried, speaking to the Major, "if I am to be an American army-way, and if he is to be shot, can't you send me to my father, and let me be with him during his last hours?"

"We might, senorita," replied Major Trieste, "if there wasn't danger of an attack on Carabeo's position."

"I'll take you to your father, Senorita Ysabel mia." It was Trabajar speaking. "Only be kind to me. Only smile kindly upon my suit, and I will give your father not only freedom, but honor. He shall have the rank, and you shall have the best that a revolutionary leader can give."

The girl looked at the great black-bearded villain with growing terror in her eyes. She had always feared this lion, even when he had stroked his shaggy mane to accomplish her purposes. Now that both she and her father were his prisoners, she was in deadly terror of him.

"Senora, give this girl a strong room, and I will furnish a guard. She will keep her here today, or at least as long as we stay, Captain Trabajar."

The little man spoke with some spirit, as if he were reminding his inferior of his place. And Trabajar, who had released the girl, bowed gratefully and, mockingly, and went out of the house.

Ysabel found herself a prisoner in a rude room, filled to the ceiling from the hallway and a tiny square of barred window for its only source of air and light. In one corner was the room's only one-post bed, the remaining supports being built into the adobe wall. The only other furnishings were two low stools of American make.

The room was hot and stuffy even at that hour of the morning. It was close, suffocating with the odor of stale tobacco and mescal and pulque, the two national drinks of Mexico. The girl's bed, a mere litter of ragged blankets on a cheap American-made mattress, had been slept upon on the previous night. The room had naturally not been aired since it was built, as there is no way to air these primitive chambers.

Ysabel sat down on one of the stools and gazed out at the little grated window. She was wondering vaguely and dumbly what her fate was to be. The little Major had told her that she would be securely guarded not only against intrusion, but against escape, and even now a corporal was pacing the hall in front of her door. Her only hope of liberties were pacing their heat outside her window.

"Comidas, comidas, senorita mia," said the old Indian woman, coming in with her breakfast and making a very low old-fashioned courtesy.

The old woman set the little plate of food down on the remaining unoccupied stool and left the room. Ysabel looked at the disgusting array of food, cold tortillas, a bowl of cooling enchiladas, with the grease rapidly coagulating across the top, some black coffee and a tiny wedge of Mexican cheese. She was really hungry. She would gladly have had some chili con carne or Mexican tamales, but it seemed that no such dainties were to be had, and the nearest thing was the national dish and the national stuff of life, enchiladas and tortillas.

"Bah!" cried the Castilian beauty, "I'd as soon eat Boston baked beans and brown bread! Why can't they bring me something fit for a lady to eat! I am no vulture that I must live on carrion!"

She nibbled daintily at the cheese and drank a few sips of the black, unsweetened coffee. Then in a pet she threw the whole tray out into the hallway at the sentry's feet, and heard him guffawing loudly at what he regarded as a fine joke.

For the entire morning she sat with her face in her hands, musing bitterly. At-an hour that she judged to be near noon by the delicious scent of boiled corn coming from the kitchen, the old woman came and peeped in at the door, grinning and chortleying, and asked her if she wanted some cool water to drink. She brought it in an unglazed Indian bowl. Ysabel's throat was baked and her head throbbing with the intense heat. She drank the water and begged the old woman for some more to pour in which to bathe her face and hands. This done, she asked the squaw to fetch her clothes, so she could tidy up a little, and also to bring her some of that delicious boiled corn with some salt, when it was done.

Ysabel tidied herself up considerably, an art that she was an adept in, and ate all the boiled roasting ears that the old woman's basket had brought, preparing to begin a campaign at the earliest moment. She meant to try what a woman's wiles could do. Since the shelling the corporal's position with smiles from time to time, and had got a grin or two in return. She planned to try to take him by storm. At one o'clock she started in a regular flirtation, and it advanced apace.

But soon she discovered that something else was in the air—something big and important. She heard a great deal of noise and bustle in the house and on the patio, and horsemen constantly passing and repassing along the road. If there was a possible, she decided that perhaps she could get past the sentry and escape during the thick of the fight. Not a shot had been yet fired, and still there was something in the air that said very plainly that trouble was afoot.

It was in the early afternoon attempted flirtation and about the middle of the afternoon that the silence of the desert was punctuated by a single distant shot. Then, suddenly, a bugle close at hand sounded, "Boots and saddles, rebels, quick!" Two minutes later a horde of dusty peons came by the house at a dead gallop, and were swallowed up in a cloud of dust.

Ysabel went to the window and stood looking and listening, as indeed did the sentries of the yard, who called to the house who was not actively engaged in whatever was going forward. The noise of galloping died down to a breath; then, suddenly, came the loud crackle of rifle fire, and quickly over-laid upon it the horrible rataplan of machine guns.

More horsemen passed the house, going toward the firing, and dead men waving their guns and yelling like demons. There was a detonation like the sound of heavy blasting, and the house shook like by a report close by, as if lightning had struck one of the cottonwoods in the dooryard.

"That's a field gun," said Ysabel aloud to herself. She had heard that sound too often in northern France not to recognize it now. "Oh, my Lord! I wonder if there is actual war between the United States and Mexico."

There was a second detonation and a second loud clap, this time as if lightning had hit the house.

Ysabel crouched down on the floor in terror; they were plainly gunning for that house—military headquarters. The noises outside became terribly confused. She heard men yelling orders at the top of their voices, heard wounded men screaming, heard a horse suddenly wounded, give that terrible cry that every battlefield knows. The fighting was coming immediately close, and it was only a matter of seconds before the range finder would spot the house she was in.

She ran to the sentry and begged him to take her away. And just then Trabajar dashed into the hall. He dismissed the sentry with a word and turned to the girl.

"Come with me!" he ordered. "This house is under fire. It will be blown to atoms in five minutes! Get your suit-case and come with me!"

Ysabel was in a quandary. To remain in the house a moment longer meant imminent danger; yet she feared to go with this bearded villain.

"I must change my clothes," she parried. "Please step outside till I can make a little change."

"No!"

Trabajar leaped to her side and, catching her by both arms, whirled her around and pushed her from the room. He dragged her to where her own pony stood saddled and waiting for her. The multifold noise of battle was growing if possible more terrible every moment. Bullets began to cut thru the branches of the cottonwoods. A group of terrified peons came running along the irrigation ditch, some of them throwing away their empty Krags as they ran. Ysabel looked at her new warden and went sick with fright.

"Get up!" he roared.

He was trying to lift her upon her pony, but she had "gone limber," as children say, and refused to be lifted. The man swore a loud oath as she slipped back to the ground for the second time.

"Young woman!" he bawled at her over the noise of battle, "you'll ride your own pony and let me lead him, or else I'll carry you away in my arms; and if I have to do that you'll be sorry for it!"

There was a horrible menacing look in the man's face, and the girl, trembling like an aspen, quickly mounted her own pony and agreed to go obediently. To make assurance doubly sure and stop all escape, "Blackbeard" put a strap hastily about her waist and tied it securely thru the pony's girth.

The giant rode at one side, leading her pony by a bridle rein, and a peon cavalryman—the one whom she had seen on sentry duty early that morning—rode at the other and held the other rein. During the last few troubled years Ysabel de Soo Paulo had been through dangers and hardships; now for the first time she was positively frightened. She feared some unspeakable evil. Perhaps she would be held in the durance of some old mountain fastness for years, and worse, she had known in that one Mexican girl having met such a fate at the hands of Mexican outlaws. And for Major Trieste and his escort, she would have fought to the last to remain on the battlefield, in the hope that some merciful bullet would end her struggle there.

The three rode rapidly thru the mesquite down a chaparral path, up a gently marked trail, and the sound of the battle rapidly diminished in the distance. Night came down, and the sounds of battle ceased altogether.

Ysabel could spend no time in conjectures as to the cause or the outcome of the clash for wondering what was to be her own fate. After the treachery of Juan's men and Trabajar's actions and declarations, she felt that there was no

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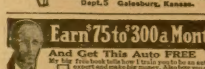

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use for her to appeal to any one. She even doubted if her father was still living. Perhaps Trabajar had him executed that day. Her fear of this man grew into a positive shrinking horror.

Ysabel had always prided herself on the possession of a brave heart. But here alone in the black desert, this black night after a day of terror and alarms, her heart sank within her, and she felt that at the least threatened move from her giant captor she should certainly faint. So she prayed for protection against this thing—feared to be spared her consciousness so that she could fight to the last for her honor or her life.

CHAPTER VIII.
"GONE!"

IT WAS not an hour after Ysabel left Juan's tent that he got another letter from his fellow spy, Telligon, that Carabeo's irregulars, whose secrets he as Lieutenant Colonel was supposed to know, were betraying U. S. troops to have his brother Harry in prison somewhere back of their lines; also that they had quite a large amount of home-manufactured powder stored in the cellars of old Senora Nixtlimal's ranch-house. The troops were sailing, and his advice and permission to go forward and release the prisoner and capture or destroy the powder.

Juan was on fire at this information. "It's Trabajar's doings," he said to himself. "It's of a piece with his sending me about in the States and shooting Bill Brant. But I'll give those scoundrels a scare before I go." And then turn loose every prisoner they've got and run for it! They forced my hand on old Don Saco Paulo, and now that Harry is trying to reach me thru my brother's!

A few minutes later, when the whole camp was drunk on the news of victory, Juan sent up a single box-kite signal which said: "You have my instructions to proceed to the Nixtlimal ranch in battle formation." And a few minutes later still, he rode out of camp with two peons whom he had bought, with a large bright gold ear-ring, whatever cause they thought they represented, and leaving word with a subordinate officer that he was going on a secret scouting expedition, made for some high rocky foothills to the east of the Nixtlimal ranch.

He had got old Diablo back on his return from his railroad trip into the States, but had been "persuaded" under pressure to give Hero to the scoundrel Trabajar, the same night that Trabajar had shot Brant. Every time he thought of him, that night, that he had to remain in the States a while longer for important business. Now Juan realized that it was to kidnap his brother Harry that the villain had turned back. Well, Trabajar should sweat for that day's work, that was all!

From his high perch he had both parties under observation as the Americans advanced across the open desert in the brilliant forenoon sunshine, and the Mexicans loafed under the cotton-woods along the edge of the irrigated fields of the Nixtlimal ranch, unconscious of the approach of any enemy. Juan likewise had his two associates under observation. He had not allowed them to climb the slope of the hill, but had kept them to dismount and give him their horses, while they took their station in a little grassy depression at the foot. A little grassy depression that would likewise allowed them only side arms, while he had with him a high-power Springfield. And they would have to know that no man who can be bought with gold can ever be depended on to stay bought.

As soon as the sun had mounted high enough in the heavens for him to use it for heliographic signaling, Juan took from his coat a large folding mirror, and began to flash signals to the American commander, and then at the end of from time to time during the remainder of the forenoon and during the battle in the afternoon, while he was not spotting the shots that came so near blowing up that house in which Ysabel was marooned, and Juan failed to know the third shot was probably all that saved her life. He had just spotted the second hit, and was lowering the field ground thru his field glasses and trying to calculate how far the shot had fallen short, when he saw upon the edge of vision first his own horse, Hero, and Ysabel's brown pony. Then, while he still gazed, he saw the fleeing white girl struggling together in front of the casa, saw the giant force her to mount her pony, and saw the two—Trabajar and the girl and her two captors—gallop away out of the fight.

Instantly and as lost all interest in the skirmish. He even lost interest temporarily in his brother's welfare. There was nothing he could do to help those troopers now, anyway. His practiced eye told him that they were already in possession of the ranch and would have the house in a few minutes more without his aid. He knew what Trabajar's action meant; it could mean only one thing, the girl's utter dishonor. He recognized the man with him, Pedro Telligon, the giant's tool and utter slave.

"The dirty beast!" he growled. "And to think I got her into this mess! He'll think himself privileged with a woman of myself have denounced as a spy. But I'll get her out of this safe if it costs me my life."

He threw down the mirror, then snatched it up again and thrust it inside his coat, slapped the field glasses into the case, and raced down the side of the rocky point on where the three horses were tethered.

"Good old Diablo," he whispered, "it's a good thing I've got you now. You're the only horse in Chihuahua State that could overtake old Hero on a straight away race. And I'm not sure he isn't but one other I can think of that could. That"—his eyes molstened as he mentioned the name—"that's Julia's red mare, Princesa."

He called the two bribe takers to him and told them the truth—that he was going south to see Trabajar. He told them less truthfully that the Mexicans were winning the skirmish which he had been watching; then he sent them back to camp with their lips sealed by the promise of a hundred-dollar piece of gold if they kept quiet.

Before the last shot of the running skirmish was through he was well to the south of the battlefield and riding like mad. His mind was tormented with the grievous doubt that he following a trail now parallel to the one which the girl and her captors had taken, but which led into it some miles farther south. Juan analyzed Trabajar's disposition and mental processes, and made his calculations as accurately as an engineer calculates strains, torsions and margins of safety.

His chance of overtaking them in the open road was slight, but he knew Trabajar's haunts and stations in the desert, and he felt that by a short cut he lay in reaching the nearest of these before the others did. The one he was riding for was a tiny ranch house in the bottom of a deep arroyo, with level mesa on each side of it, a habitation not to be discovered until one was right upon the verge of the deep gorge, and not always then, for the hut was in an arroyo within the arroyo, and from certain angles could it be seen at all. There was a tiny water hole behind it. Juan knew as an outlaw how outlaws to lie in wait for their prey or hide from pursuit.

By a more or less circuitous route and at the risk of killing Diablo, Juan made the race for this rendezvous. It was about midnight when he approached the rim of the arroyo from the far side and saw no light about the hut. He tied Hero to a mesquite bush and, clinging to anything that offered a handhold, climbed directly down the sandy side of the arroyo to the cabin. He knew that he had no time to lose. He must get quiet before they came up. He left Hero to a mesquite, crouched down behind the cabin walls he heard the sound of horses' hoofs on the stony trail that led down to a water hole at the bottom of the arroyo. Presently he heard a gruff voice that he recognized as Trabajar's, and then the sobbing of a girl.

"Whoa!" called Trabajar suddenly, while the two were still two yards from the cabin. Then, "Pedro, you might as well go back. I'll join you before noon tomorrow."

"No!" rang out the voice of Ysabel shrill with terror and protest.

"Ah!" exclaimed Trabajar speaking, of course, in Spanish. "Do as I tell you, Pedro!"

"Senor Pedro," pleaded the girl, "if you are a gentleman—if you have a mother or a sister that you care for—do not do this!"

"Got to do what the Captain says," answered the peon doggedly; and Juan heard the two horses' hoofs ring back over the stony trail. Presently all was silent. Juan cocked his big Colt's revolver and waited.

"Come on!" he heard Trabajar order. "Giddap!"

Then suddenly there was a great stamping and snorting, and Trabajar began to swear furiously and shout to a horse. "Whoa! Whoa! Steady! Stand still!"

Juan could not picture what could be the matter unless the spirited girl were trying to make her horse break away from the scoundrel. But he knew the time had come for quick action, and he ran forward lightly in the darkness, his pistol at the ready. He came up quite close, and saw matters at a glance. The girl had fainted and fallen from her saddle; but a strap about her waist and tied to the saddle horn held her from falling to the ground, and she hung dangerously at the horse's side, head down, while her horse, frightened beyond control, plunged and reared and threatened at any moment to break away from Trabajar and go dashing down the cañon.

Thrusting his pistol back into his gun sheath and sending his hunting knife, Juan ran forward. As he did so the astonished Trabajar let go the horse's rein. Quick as a flash Juan severed the strap that held the girl and caught her on his left arm to keep her from rolling beneath the animal's heels as they spurred the ground and dashed off thru the darkness.

The reader can only guess at the dark thoughts that flashed thru Trabajar's wicked brain as he saw his schemes thus suddenly thwarted by a man upon whom he had spied, while pretending to be his friend, a man who had always proved a mystery to him, but who was

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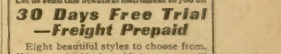

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masterful and gallant and quick to act. He certainly knew Juan well enough to know that whatever the young American's political affiliations were, he would certainly bring swift vengeance upon him for this dastardly act.

As Juan let the young woman gently to the ground there was a spurt of flame in his face, and he felt a stinging sensation on the under side of his left arm. He dropped to a sitting posture and fired at the center of a dark bulk before him. He fired three times so rapidly that the shots were almost like one. Trabajar threw his arms out into the shape of a great cross, and his pistol exploded harmlessly a second time as it fell from his grasp. The next moment he clapped both hands over his wounds and went down, doubling up into a knot and groaning frightfully.

The girl, partly roused by the shots moaned feebly, but Juan was interested first of all in completely disarming the giant. He ran to him and pushed him down upon his back, and after taking from him a long knife and a second pistol. Trabajar's eyes looked up into his malignantly in the darkness, but he neither moved nor spoke.

"What is it?" moaned the girl. "Senor Pedro, is that you? Juan, was I dreaming?

"Ah," cried Juan, "Pedro Telligon deserted you like the coward he is!"

"You? Is that—not Juan?"

"Yes, it is Juan; and I want to say, Ysabel, that I'm awfully sorry for what has happened. But I can't stop to take time for explanations. I must get you to a place of safety, and that quick. That scoundrel Pedro is likely to bring here at any moment. He didn't get far. Furthermore, he can find plenty of cutthroats to back him up here—if he chooses. Let me help you upon old Hero. Ah, Hero, we meet again!"

He put the girl upon the horse he knew and loved so well, one of the few horses even in a class with his Diablo. They would make a winning pair indeed.

"Ride up the little trail yonder at the back of the hut, up the slope to the left. It's pretty dangerous, but old Hero is sure-footed. I know him. You'll find my horse tied at the top. Wait there for me. I must speak to this man, if he's got life enough left in him to answer."

Trabajar was plainly dying, his breath was coming in great sobs. His eyes were becoming fixed. However, for a man so powerful as he was and in the prime of manhood, death might be hours coming. Juan leaned over him.

"Captain Trabajar," he queried, "what have you done with my brother? Where is my brother Harry?"

The dying man looked as if he did not comprehend the question.

"Where is my brother?" Juan repeated the question sternly, and shook the dying man.

"Gone!" moaned Trabajar.

"Gone? But where? Tell me, man!"

"Gone!" repeated the other.

"Gone where?" Juan was tortured with the worst suspicions. "Speak, man, what have you done with him?"

"He's gone!" was all that Juan could get him to say.

Perhaps the dying man had it in his mind not to lie about it, but to deny any part in his brother's imprisonment and claim that he had gone away, and this the boy became convinced in his clouded brain. At any rate, all he would say was "gone," and Juan, growing desperate to obtain the unprotected girl, dragged him into the hut, placed a pail of water beside him, and hurriedly scrambled up the side of the arroyo.

"I must get you to a place of safety," said Juan to the girl. "And then I must hunt for your father and my brother. I greatly fear——"

He choked on the words. He feared for his brother what the girl was fearing for her father—that he had been made away with.

"Then your brother Harry is imprisoned too? Oh, you must waste no time with me! I will go with you. We will ride to Mormon Creek together without any loss of time."

"We are going into the heart of the bandits' country," said Juan. "Have you the courage?"

"I have!"

"I'm glad I killed him," mused Juan aloud, presently, as they galloped over the mesa. "I'm glad I killed him."

It was a moment later that the pain in his arm reminded him of his own wound, and he then noticed that his whole left side was sticky with blood. He feared a severed artery, and stopped to pull his coat partly off and begin tying a handkerchief about the place, using his right hand and his teeth. But the girl saw his plight, dismounted, and making a neat tourniquet, tied it above the wound. Her deft fingers, as they touched him, thrilled him to a sort of delight at having her so near him. He thought of how desperately she had acted with him so short a time before, and for a moment he mused on pleasant things, pleasant possibilities. Then in a poignant flash of brilliant memory of Julia swallowed up all other thoughts and he groaned aloud.

"Does your arm pain you?" asked the girl, forgetting to sob for the first time since she had awakened from her swoon.

"It is very painful," he answered. "But we must ride on; we must not lose any time."

They paused at daybreak and made a hasty breakfast of cheese and chocolate, which Juan carried in his pockets. Then, after a brief hour's rest, during which the troubled girl dozed a little and moaned a great deal in her sleep, they started forth again for an all-day ride to Tom Swedler's cabin on Mormon Creek.

Never for a moment had Juan ceased to be troubled by that one word "gone" that Trabajar had certainly not uttered. And as he rode along with the silent girl, keeping a sharp lookout for any one who might be following, he began to one thing: if Trabajar had done away with Harry he would have to regard himself as the real cause of Harry's death, and he would for very expiation ride into the hitching-room of the court a clean breast of everything and face a firing squad.

CHAPTER IX.

A MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY.

IT WAS late at night, and the two prisoners, Harry Gonsaulys and De Sao Paulo—for Ysabel's father was Harry's fellow prisoner—were whispering together of some means of escape, while the red-bearded giant, Tom Swedler, dozed on the floor. While the other two lieutenants snored on the pine straw a few feet away, when some one called out of the darkness: "Hello Swedler!"

"Hello!" roared "Redbeard." "Who is that?"

"Sergeant Pablo Perez, orderly to Major Triesta, Captain Swedler," replied the voice.

"Advance for recognition, Sergeant Perez!" bellowed Swedler.

Both Harry and De Sao Paulo were on the qui vive.

"Hello, Pablo!" they heard "Redbeard" say a moment later. "What's the row?"

"Battle at Nixthimal ranch. Gringoes rode down on us, and we shot them to pieces. Held our ranch and saved the fieldpiece of some sort. It didn't shoot but twice—must have blown up. They didn't do much.

"How many prisoners did you take—how much stuff?"

"None. They had machine guns, I tell you; we had to retreat.

"I thought you said you licked 'em?"

"Well," laughed the sergeant, "we licked, on we got as many of them as they got of us. We lost about twenty-five or thirty, I reckon. Neither of us had commanded the release of Harry Gonzaulus, this Juan Gonzaulus' brother. I didn't know we had any prisoners except Major Trietsa. Have you got him here?"

Harry was ready to shout for joy. He expected an order for his release in the man's next breath.

"Have you got an order for me to give him, I suppoin' I have got him?" asked Swedler.

"No."

Harry's spirits fell.

"But I have an order to stay execution"—the prisoners touched each other in the dark here and held their breaths—"on Senor de Sao Paulo. Here it is: 'Captain Thomas Swedler: Do not execute Senor de Sao Paulo until further orders. (Signed) J. Gonzaulus.'"

"Did Colonel Gonzaulus give you that to bring to me?" asked Swedler.

"No, he gave it to De Sao Paulo's daughter, along with a bogus passport that got her arrested at first sight. Poor De Sao Paulo, who had been trembling with joy at the first news, now groaned. "And she gave it to Major Trietsa, and he sent it here after the battle. I nearly rode a beautiful piece of horseflesh to death getting here, one I captured running loose just after the fight. She is a red bay, and after Colonel Gonzaulus' big dun devil is the swiftest thing on the range. Oh, I'd race Diablo at even money! Come out and have a look at her; I don't guess you intended to shoot old Sao Paulo tonight, anyway, did you? Or have you already shot him?"

"Fiends!" muttered Harry under his breath. "But I wonder where he got the red mare he's talking about. I don't know but one red mare in all this country that could keep up with that dun devil, and she's in the States."

The voices of the two men outside died away; then the talk increased again as the two peons woke up, demanded the news and got excited over it. The two prisoners listening behind the great oaken door heard old Swedler say: "Why, I know that nag. She used to belong to——"

The listeners failed to catch the next two or three words.

"I guess he does know her," muttered De Sao Paulo. "The infernal old renegade must have unearthed some good horses he's ever seen once." Swedler was just what De Sao Paulo described him to be, a renegade, a horse-thief and murderer, wanted in the United States on a score of crimes.

"Merriton, Harry. "Let's hear what they are saying."

He was being tormented with doubt. His wife owned a red mare named "Merriton." If this red mare were Princess, it could mean but one thing, he thought—that Trabajar had been back to the ranch and possibly that Julia Merriton had been killed or carried off. Perez had said that he caught the mare running loose after the battle, but that would not signify that she had not been in the battle and ridden to Merriton before the battle, and no U. S. trooper would be riding Princess, he thought.

Then suddenly there was a call, "Hello, Pablo!" and the voice of Harry and De Sao Paulo on the alert again.

"Hello, That you Pedro?" Swedler seemed to know most of these villains by their voices.

"Yes, sir. Colonel Gonzaulus been here?"

"No. Was you expectin' him to come here tonight?"

"Why, I did expect him to come here." The man's voice showed that he had come closer; also that he was excited.

"What's the matter? Where's Trabajar?" And Harry thought he noticed a shade of anxiety in Swedler's voice as he asked these questions.

"Dead! Trabajar's dead!"

"The h—l you say!" This time the anxiety was plain.

"Who killed him?" asked three voices in Mexican and one in English.

"Juan Gonsaulus killed him."

There was a long low whistle. The two men outside began talking much others's hands in the darkness; they were open in silent flight.

"I told that a—n fool, Trabajar," roared Swedler, "that Juan would turn up here. He's a fool if he didn't quit spying on him and at the same time pretendin' to be his friend!"

Harry understood now what the giant Trabajar was doing there that night at Willowcroft—pretending to be a bodyguard and acting as a Government spy, and Juan knew it.

"He didn't kill him about the spying business," replied Pedro. "He killed him about—hist! Are your prisoners asleep? Is old De Sao Paulo asleep?"

"What difference does it make, asleep or awake? What did Gonzaulus fall out with him about?"

"About Ysabel de Sao Paulo."

Harry's mind flashed back to that afternoon, which now seemed so long ago, when Juan had told him how his love for this girl as his reason for turning traitor to the United States. His thoughts were arrested by a sort of trembling of the man beside him in the darkness. The man outside was reciting what had taken place in the hut in the arroyo the night before.

When he had finished the girl's father ceased to tremble so violently, and began to weep.

"God bless him! God bless your brother!" he cried. "He has

do you reckon?" Swedler's voice was decidedly anxious.

"I don't know, but I wouldn't be surprised if he was to show up here at any minute."

"May do it," replied Swedler.

"Well, what will you do if he does come?" asked Sergeant Perez.

"I took my orders from Trabajar," defended Swedler. "I thought he knowed what he was doin'."

"Well, I took my orders from him, too," said Pedro, the deserter of girls in distress. "I'll tell you, by Saint Mary, I've got no more notion of what kind of a game him and Colonel Gonsaulus was playing than the man in the moon, and so far I've never got a centavo out of it. Trabajar and I followed him to El Paso on that trip, and then to Greenacres, and then out to that doctor's ranch at Willowcroft, and all the time I never knew whether Trabajar was a bodyguard or a spy. I always acted on his orders, and I was his bodyguard—I was that."

"You was a d—n fool, that's what you was, like the rest of us."

Sergeant Pedro kept talking in English, which the other three did not seem to understand, for they continually put questions to him and then jabbered vociferously over the answers they got. It was plain to Harry that the sergeant was terribly excited, if not scared. He wondered at his brother's power over these outlaws, and was at the same time disgusted at it.

"It's plain we're all in the same boat," said Swedler in Mexican. "The question is: What are we going to do? If Juan Gonsaulus has taken it into his head to go against us, he can sure get us into a lot of trouble. He's got away yonder better stand-in with old Trevino than Carabeo has, if Carabeo is our Colonel, and they tell me old Gonsaules from the United States is big potato's such an infernal old fool?"

"It all comes of you people taking orders from Trabajar instead of from some one who had a right to give orders!" shouted Sergeant Perez. "Trabajar was nothing but a captain with out a company, just like you, Swedler. If you'd have taken your orders from Triesta or Gonzaulus or Carabeo, or some one with some backing, you wouldn't be in this fix."

"H—l! What's the difference?" roared Swedler. "Listen, man, a dead colonel ain't no more dangerous than a dead private. You get me? If Colonel Gonsaulus comes here, by G— we don't leave, that's all! Listen, all you fellows—"

What he said was said in so low an undertone that neither Harry nor De Sao Paulo caught a word of it.

"We're in for it," whispered the latter. "Boy, I suspect they'll murder us first and then wait for your brother Harry. You've been good to me while we've been here, and I love you for it. You deserve a better fate than this. I—I—Pardon, it is no use, natural and—We will—"

"Hello!"

"That's Juan now," whispered Harry.

"Hello, Captain Swedler! Has Pedro been there?"

Harry heard the men outside the logh ouse chuckling as at the prospect of easy game.

"No!" he called Swedler.

"Yes!" roared Harry, "Mutiny! Be on your guard!"

Harry's calling out acted like a signal. Three or four shots rang out simultaneously. Then a strong electric flashlight played about the building, and four deliberate shots rang out—one, two, three, four.

"That's Juan's style," cried Harry, ecstatically. "He's still on his feet then."

He heard two or three people running for dear life, and heard the strong in two different directions. A moment later Juan crashed with the heavy padlock, opened the door, and flashed his light into the cabin. He was holding two pistols in his left hand, his own and Swedler's. And behind him walked Ysabel de Sao Paulo with an automatic in each hand.

Father and daughter fell into each other's arms. The two brothers did the same for a moment. Then Harry said warningly:

"Keep on guard, Juan, and give me one of those guns. Those devils will attack again directly."

This remarkable story will be concluded in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

Serpent and Dove.

(Continued from page 3.)

"Is there anything wrong with Dan?" "He is the pink of faithfulness," exclaimed Lucile.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Lucie. I'll go back to town, and before I sleep I'll choke that letter out o' old Caldwell's hands."

"No, no! That won't do—not now at least," pleaded Lucille. "Where did Hasbeth go?"

"God knows!"

"And why did he go?"

"It's past me. The whole thing is mysterious. Well, I'm going back now."

"But you'll keep hands off of Phineas Caldwell?"

"If you say so I will," was the reply.

"Now good night."

Doctor Burke saw the little man fit past him and take to the canoe. Lucille turned toward the house.

"I'll cut her off and have a talk with my future bride!" cried Burke. "She won't suspect, and I won't give myself away."

He darted to one side and cut thru the undergrowth. Presently he halted by a narrow path. A figure was coming his way. In another instant he threw out a hand and closed on a white wrist. There was a little cry of terror.

"It's I, Miss Lucille!" exclaimed Doctor Burke, and then he recoiled.

"Touch me not, reptile!" rang in his ears. It was the voice of Mona, the blind girl.

This mysterious story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

Clairvoyant.

A street carnival now touring the South is seemingly the repository of a most perplexing military secret. On a recent visit by this particular carnival to a Tennessee city a part of the attending throng heard a barker extol the clairvoyant power of Madam——.

This goddess of wisdom, while thoroly blindfolded, gave instant answers to any questions. The seeker after truth merely wrote on a slip of paper the question nearest his heart, which, being read out by the barker in the hearing of all the crowd, was as publicly answered.

Whether Minnie still loved Tom and where the old hermit buried the gold were questions legitimate enough, but that somebody had taken advantage of a lady's trustful disposition her answer revealed when Madam —— was confronted with the query:

"Where is Villa?"

Her reply was:

"Her real name is not Villa. It is Margaret, and she is now in Atlanta, Ga."

Down With His Ship.

(Continued From Page 3.)

Half an hour later the captain went to his stateroom. His expression was gloomy, and when he closed the door he turned the key. In one corner lay two large iron weights, each with a ring in its top. He stood looking at them fixedly. These were the things he had planned to tie to his ankles when he was ready to go down to his death.

"It is hard that I must do this when Hagar needs my helping hand so much," he muttered, "but it must be. The law of the sea is inexorable. It demands that a captain must either save all hands or go down with his ship. I failed in my duty once, but it won't be so again. With the help of these weights I will go down with my ship!"

This highly interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger. Do not miss reading it. A lot of great and timely stories will appear in the Ledger during the coming months. Send in your subscription and you will find yourself repaid ten times over.

Then the Bounce.

"You can't order me around," declared the new salesman. "I take orders from nobody."

"You demonstrated that on your last trip," said the boss, coming in at this juncture.

How NUXATED IRON helped me to whip Frank Moran

JESS WILLARD tells secret of his easy victory. Also reveals hitherto untold secret of his great triumph over Jack Johnson; says iron is greatest of all strength builders

Ordinary Nuxated Iron will often increase the strength and endurance of delicate, nervous folks 200 per cent, in two weeks time.

SPECIAL NOTE—Dr. E. Sauer, a well-known physician who has studied widely in both this country and Europe, has been specially employed to make a thorough investigation into the real secret of the great strength, power and endurance of Jess Willard, and the marvelous value of nuxated iron as a strength builder.

NEW YORK—Upon being interviewed at his apartment in the Colonial Hotel, Mr. Willard said: "Yes, I have a chemist with me to study the value of different foods and products as to their power to produce great strength and endurance, both of which are so necessary in the prize ring. On his recommendation I have often taken nuxated iron and I have particularly advocated the free use of iron by all those who wish to develop great physical and mental power. Without a doubt I am sure that I should never have been able to whip Jack Johnson so completely and easily as I did and while training for my fight with Frank Moran, I regularly took nuxated iron, and I am certain that it was a most important factor in my winning the fight so easily." Continuing, Dr. Sauer said: "Mr. Willard's case is only one of hundreds which I could cite from my own personal experience which proves conclusively the astonishing power of nuxated iron to restore strength and vitality even in most complicated chronic conditions."

Not long ago a man came to me who was nearly half a century old, and asked me to give him a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with the blood pressure of a boy of 20 and as full of vigor, vim and vitality as a young man. When the young man he really was, notwithstanding his age. The secret he said was taking iron—nuxated iron had filled him with renewed life. At 50 he was in bad health; at 46 careworn and nearly all in. Now at 60 a picture of vitality and the face beaming with the buoyancy of youth. As I have said a hundred times over iron is the greatest of all strength builders. If people would only throw away patent medicines and nauseous concoctions and take simple nuxated iron, I am convinced that the lives of thousands of persons might be saved who now die every year from pneumonia, grippe, consumption, kidney, liver and heart trouble, etc. The real and true cause which started their diseases was nothing more or less than a weakened condition brought on by lack of iron in the blood. Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good. You don't get the strength out of it, and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly looking, just like a plant trying to grow in soil deficient in iron. If you are not strong or well, you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work, or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see for yourself how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the while, double their strength and endurance and entirely get rid of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days' time simply by taking iron in the proper form. And this after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate or iron nitrate, iron simply to save a few cents. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated like nuxated iron if you want it to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless.

Many an athlete or prize fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray, while many another has gone to inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron.—E. Sauer, M. D.

JESS WILLARD AT HOME

Among all the prominent figures of the prize ring, probably none is so devoted to family life as Jess Willard. After each engagement the champion hurries to his wife and children and remains at their side until public demand forces him to leave for new encounters. Everything is done to bring up the "little Willards" with strong minds and healthy bodies. Mr. Willard accounts for his own success by saying:—

"I consider that plenty of iron in my blood is the secret of my great strength, power and endurance."

Jess Willard

NOTE—Nuxated Iron, recommended above by Dr. Sauer, is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists and whose iron constituents are widely prescribed by physicians everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated like nature's own iron, the red corpuscles in the blood, make them black, nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy in nearly all forms of indigestion as well as for nervous, run-down conditions. The manufacturers have such great confidence in Nuxated Iron that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron and increase their strength from 100 per cent. or over in four weeks' time, provided they take no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in four weeks' time. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

A Joke as His Wife.

"I got off a good joke on my wife tuther day," admitted Gap Johnson of Rumpus Ridge, Ark. "She recited suthin' that she'd read in a book she got hold of some'rs about 'Man's work extends from sun to sun, but woman's work is never done,' and it 'peared to give her considerable satisfaction. And I says, 'Good reason why,' says I, 'she never gits started'—that like that. Yaw-haw-haw!"—Life.

The Dull Didn't Know.

The novelist was out walking and chanced upon a bull in a field. He only saved himself by being thrown over a barbed wire fence by jumping at the cost of torn garments and many scratches.

As he sat on the grass beside the bull, the farmer appeared.

"What do you mean," the novelist shouted, "by keeping such a savage bull on that field?"

"Surely the bull has some rights in the field," the farmer replied, smiling quietly.

"But do you know who I am?" the novelist exclaimed. "I am Henry Hilary Bank, author of 'Git Hair,' and 'The Lips of Love,' and a member of Parliament."

"Well, well!" said the farmer. "Why didn't ye tell the bull?"

✖

Offered a Chance.

Daughter (romantically)—"Oh, mother, I want to rise to higher things. I want to be above the common mortals and to enjoy myself with the things of a free spaces of the upper air."

Mother—"That suits exactly. Elsa! You can climb right up on this stepladder and put up the clean curtains."

✖

The Darker Side.

"Does wearing a fancy tie indicate that a person has a joyous disposition?"

"Not always," answered the oldman. "Sometimes it merely indicates that the wearer lacked sufficient will power to rebel when his wife wished it on him."

Two Rogues.

An incident is told of a woman whose husband, a wealthy man, died suddenly without leaving any will. The widow, desirous of securing the whole of the property, concealed her husband's death and persuaded a poor shoemaker to take his place while a will could be made. Accordingly he was closely muffled in bed as if very sick, and the lawyer was sent for to draw up the will. The shoemaker in a feeble voice, bequeathed half of all the property to his wife.

"Have you done with the remainder?" asked the lawyer.

"Yes," answered the shoemaker, "I give and bequeath to the poor little shoemaker's apprentice, who has always been a good neighbor and a deserving man," thus securing a rich bequest for himself.

The widow was thunderstruck with the man's audacious cunning, but did not dare to expose the fraud and so the two rogues shared the estate.

✖

Wife—"But if we don't keep a servant what will the neighbors say?"

Husband—"We don't keep a servant we won't know."

✖

A Little Problem.

Jones—"I say, Smith, you are a good hand at solving problems."

Smith—"Yes, I am considered very clever at it."

Jones—"Well, here is a little problem for you. There is a man named Lister living in Dublin who has had a daughter. Now, she was in love with a chap she knew, but her father did not approve of, so one day she eloped with him. When the old man found out he was very angry, and at once followed them. Now, then, what time was it?"

Smith (angrily)—"What time was it? How on earth do you suppose I can tell you? I give it up."

Jones (triumphantly)—"Why, a little after two, of course."

✖

His Misfortune Heard.

In the office of the Town Council post-graduate students in the abbreviations generally in use were Ass., Asst., and Asst. Assistant. An Irishman, employed temporarily in the postmaster's office during his leisure, was sending away his weekly report to the head postmaster, which ran as follows.

"Dear Sir: I beg to report that the ox has returned to duty and the ass has now gone on leave."

✖

Didn't Have to Catch Them.

Little Jones's father had just returned from the store and was opening up some sheets of sticky fly paper and placing it about the room. Jane watched a minute and then burst out with:

"Oh, papa, down at the corner grocery you can get the paper with the flies already caught. They have lots of it in the window."

Messenger Boy chanding brass a telegram from his wife, at the shore)—"Any answer?"

Brown— (without opening it)—"Yes. Just say 'busted'."

Her Bank Extravagance.

Being economical in an excellent virtue, but old Skinflint had practised this quality to such an extent that with him it had become almost a vice. His meanness sometimes driven almost to the limit, verge of derision by his meanness at times. The climax came when they moved into new house. When old Skinflint was seen to put out, his wife thought she would reconnoitre the walls of the drawing-room as a result to make it look attractive and pretty. Next day Skinflint saw it he nearly had eye-strain a fit.

"I don't dislike the pattern or the color," he gasped, purple in the face with rage, "but I do object to the way you have put it on. You extravagant woman! How dare you waste it other on?"

"Why, how else could I have done it?" meekly answered his wife. "You should have told me you didn't suppose to have backed it on. Yes you'd have to have put it on the house, do you suppose?"

✖

An Old Saying Discarding.

A politician and a theatrical critic of Chicago is of a somewhat comical turn, which sometimes gets the better of him. One day recently he received from the latter a letter which ran as follows:

"One day his 12-year-old son, who had you seen him, knows a little down his desk, looking up at his father, asked: 'Dad, is it true that there is hope among thieves?'

"To us," said dad. "Thieves are just as bad as other people."

✖

Old Tales Dramatized.

"Times are different to what they were when I was a boy."

"For instance?"

"Well, we used to get our thrills reading dime novels in which seven Indians "bit the dust," but they don't do that any movie theater and see 'em actually doing it."

Asking Him Useful.

"I can't see," said Mrs. Torkins, "what is the use of a husband."

"What is the use of a husband?" she asked.

"I cannot," replied the lady, coldly.

"Ah, that's good!" laughed Bobby.

I don't suppose I'll ever see a catch as quickly as a woman can. Well, the way to spell mean is N-o-.

I started on another.

"Ah," laughed the lady, "that's good! I was never cut on a catch as quickly as a woman can. Well, suppose you try Cold-as-ice? Isn't that 'Topping'?"

✖

Wrinkles Not in Style.

In a shop recently the well-known actress, who is noted for her personal pluck, asked for a traveling bag of alligator skin. The shopkeeper, who had not quite perfected her booklets out yesterday some of smooth leather, showed her a bag of genuine alligator skin.

"Ah, madam," replied the wily dealer, "I know these bags are not to your taste, but of vogue. The correct alligator bag is made from the skin of an alligator that has been massaged."

✖

Nothing Unusual.

"I suppose, Eileen," she remarked to her new girl, with feigned indifference, "that you overheard my husband and me quarreling rather earnestly the day before you came?"

"I hope, however, that you did not think anything unusual was going on between us, mum. Of course, we have all had our little differences since a day passed that we haven't, but the neighbors didn't believe one or the other or us would be kill entirely."

Just the Thing.

A gentleman, having to his cellar some ale on the verge of spoiling, was one day walking around his estate when he came upon a party of workmen.

Hailing the foreman, he ostentatiously presented the beer to the men, giving them leave to fetch it as they required it.

Some time afterward as met the foreman, and proceeded to extract a suitable acknowledgment of his bounty.

"Well, sir, how have your men bate that ale?"

"Yes, sir, and thank you."

"How did you like it?"

"Well, sir, 'twas the very thing for us, thank you kindly."

"That's right. But what do you mean by just the thing?"

"Well, sir, if it had been a little better we shouldn't 'a' had it at all if it had been a little worse we couldn't 'a' drinked it."

Poet's Wife—"Never marry a poet, Bess! They are too optimistic! Only yesterday I took out last bit of my silver to the pawnshop! And what do you think he brought home? Why, more of silver polish, that the pawnbroker indaced him to purchase on it, for!"

✖

It Couldn't Be Done.

They were getting up a charity concert in the small provincial town, and the committee determined to work hard to make a great success of it. The best singers and tradesmen were called upon, and the son of the latter, a very spectacled, whose place was somewhere in the North, an appeal was duly made.

"As an very sorry," was the cost note-charity sent to the committee's representative, "but Ah's stopped subscribin' ter a' them things."

Well, you'll give us an order for an advertisement on the program?" suggested the caller.

The cost merchant shook his head. Then a sudden inspiration seized him.

"Ah tell 'ee what Ah'll dae, 'tho," he said. "Ah'll get ma doobter tae dae't instead."

✖

Couldn't Walk Out.

A gang of Italian laborers were working in a section of Boston where the mud was excessively deep. Suddenly one of the gang cried out:

"Help! help!"

"What's the matter out there?" came a voice from the construction shanty.

"Oooh! Brings da shoe! Brings da peek! Antonio's stuck in da mud!"

"How far in?"

"Up to knee knees."

"Then he can walk out."

"No! No! He canna no walk! He wrongs end up!"

✖

A Good Guess.

The teacher had explained that a monarchy is a country ruled by a king. The pupils got that.

"If the king dies, who rules?" the teacher continued.

"The queen," some one suggested.

"Yes, under certain circumstances which I shall explain later, that is true. Now, if the queen dies, who takes her place?"

Only one boy ventured to reply.

"The jack," he said.

✖

Exchange of Courtesies.

The old gentleman's wife was getting into the carriage, and he neglected to assist her.

"You are not so gallant, John, as when I was a girl, she exclaimed, in gentle reproach.

"No," was his ready response, "and you are not so buoyant as when I was a boy."

His Example.

Where the carefully trained child learns bad manners is a standing mystery to its watchful parents. These amateur rearers of the young are often heard propounding this query, but generally without result. Once in a while, however, out of the deep silence comes an illuminating answer.

Johnny furnished one just the other day. He had just finished a particularly toothsome dish of apple pudding, which he ate to the last morsel. Then, despite the fact that there was company at the table, he deliberately picked up his saucer and licked it clean.

Mother, who noticed the mother, after a shocked gasp, asked him how he could do a thing like that?

"Cats," replied Johnny—Life.

✖

The Real Reason.

"Why does the operation of hanging kill a man?" asked Doctor Whatsit. A whichsaid replied

"Because inspiration is checked, circulation stopped and blood ceases to coagulate the brain."

"Nosh," replied his grace; "it is because the rope is not long enough to let his feet touch the ground."

✖

A Sell.

Small Boy—"Ma says they've got a new baby girl at Mr. Jones' the grocer's."

Small Girl—"Huh! What a sell! Will they have to keep it?"

"Of course! Why?"

"Cause there's no card in the shop window for them to sell."

Jack—"If you refuse me I will blow out my brains!"

Belle—"Oh, Jack! If you could only blow some in I'd accept you!"

An Impudent Boy.

"I heard him call you 'Dockie,'" announced the small brother.

"Well, what of it?" demanded his sister defiantly.

"Oh, nothin' much," answered the small brother. "I was only thinkin' maybe it's because of the way you walk, but it ain't very nice of him."

✖

CANDOR NOT DESIRED.

When some sad suitor mourns the bit And tales about his piety,
You've rather glad that fellah do not Mean all they sometimes say.

Slow to Move.

Bill—"You know we never have any earthquakes down in the country I came from."

Jill—"Well, perhaps you had 'em and the people didn't know it."

"Not much."

"Well, those people down there look as if reaching words shake 'em up."

✖

It Ought To.

Patience—"She says she makes her plans talk."

Patrice—"No such thing. If it could talk it would say what up, I'll bet you."

Sizing Him Up.

After attending a minstrel show one evening Mr. Tooping thought he'd try and some of the jokes on his wife at breakfast next morning.

"My dear," he began, with a grin, "can you spell money with two letters?"

"Ah, that's good!" laughed Bobby.

"Ah," laughed the lady, "that's good! I was never cut on a catch as quickly as a woman can. Well, suppose you try Cold-as-ice? Isn't that 'Topping'?

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A Sad Case.

Visitor—"What has become of your living skeleton?"

Showman—"Oh, he is dead, poor chap! Drank himself to death."

Visitor—"Indeed! So now and"

Showman—"Yes, he married the two-headed woman, and they used to have months nagging at him and two hats to buy; it broke him all in."

✖

STOPIAN SCHEME.

In many jobs the laborer
Finds nothing to his liking;
We wonder if ere time will come
When the strikers strike on striking!

Had to Puke.

The man of great financial prominence had met with an accident.

"Will have to probe," said the doctor.

Just at that moment the man recovered consciousness and exclaimed: "If it's a surgical operation go ahead, but don't use that word. It's another investigation give me an anaesthetic."

✖

Summer Resort Ethics.

"She says she's a live text alpha."

"Well?"

"Would it be good form to ask for another tonight?"

"Unquestionably, my boy. If you don't she may think you didn't like the first one."

His Latest Trick.

"What becomes of the rock the boat fool friend of yours?"

"He's got a new trick now. He rides a motorcycle and tries to see how small a break in the traffic he can dash thru."

"The Mackerel salesperson—"Do you think dadda, of the fancy goods, is pretty?"
The Limerick salesperson—"Well, whenever she looks into one of the mirrors in her store the manager says it has the damaged goods bargains."

OILY OSCAR'S BUSTED SCHEME!

Oily Oscar—"Say, Pat, we're in luck! Here's some shifty currency dealer like de banks use for pack money in! We will fill 'em up with pebbles and—

"Walk into a good restaurant and persuade we're hard, reasonable and have a good big feed and have it charged to the bank.

"Hold-up Mick (Pat) Time!—"Yeah, we accuse. Bill, and grab the money bags. Mike runs for de limb out of livin' instead of coin! Oh, my poor Leah!"

Oily Oscar—"Holy mother of measles, but dem hold-uppers must have gotten on to our little leakin' system dey found rocks in de sacks instead of coin!"

Ma'm'selle Felice

Or, A Studio Mystery

By Helen E. Haskell

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CHAPTER IX.
TO THE RESCUE.

A FEW blocks from the house Felice and Kirk Ballinger came upon a vacant taxi. Kirk hailed it. Less than five minutes later it drew up in front of Mrs. Bonner's brown-faced domicile, where, after some delay, a half-dressed, sleepy-looking maid opened the door a crack in answer to their ring and demanded what was wanted.

It is Ma'm'selle Felice, and I wish to see Monsieur de Baylerot, began Felice, then stopped as the door was thrown wide.

Oh, then you will marry him, after all? He said you had run away!" cried the maid, attempting to reconcile her skirt and blouse, which were at outs.

No matter about that now. Go up, please, and tell him that I am here, outside, and that I must see him at once."

The girl obeyed without comment, leaving the outer door half open as she turned away. Felice drew it softly together, then she and Kirk returned to the waiting taxi.

It seemed an interminable time before the door opened again and De Baylerot's bulky form appeared on the threshold. Coming heavily down the steps, he planted himself in front of the taxicab. He was dressed as he had been in the earlier evening, his frock coat buttoned across his huge chest, the white gardenia in his buttonhole.

"Ah, my adored one!" he said, holding his shining top hat against his diaphragm. "I knew you would return, and I am ready. The license is here."

He patted his chest. His breathing was still squeaky, but it was without the raucous rumbling that Ballinger had noticed when he had seen him last.

"Monsieur de Baylerot," said Felice, "I have not come back in order to marry you, but ——"

"You have not come back to marry me? You do not regret having broken my heart—made me an humiliation?"

"We will talk of that another time, monsieur. Something more serious demands——"

"More serious than my so suddenly destroyed happiness? What then can it be, mademoiselle?"

"You may be able to save an innocent man from very great suffering."

"I am at a loss for a complete understanding."

Felice leaned towards him, the wind ruffling the soft hair about her face, the red flower in her hat flaming in the moonlight. She was lovelier, more beautiful than ever, in this new, tensely serious mood.

"Tonight—when you went to Clarke Lindsey's studio in search of me, did you see anybody?" she asked.

"This gentleman with you I have seen, and yes, another one I have encountered in the hall. A gentleman of great politeness who has offered me a whisky."

"But, Monsieur de Baylerot, you visited a studio on the upper floor. It was there you discovered my hat. Did you see nobody there?"

There was suppressed excitement in the girl's voice.

"Ah!"

Both Ballinger and Felice waited eagerly for the man to go on. But he merely stood nodding his head, his great jowls shaking.

"Whom did you see?" demanded Ballinger, sternly. "It is of the utmost importance for us to know."

"Only a mad artist, smelling to high heaven of garlic. I rapped, but he did not bid me enter, so I left him there about. I thought that I had found you, adored one, and I flung open the door, and at once I saw the hat and the so leeftle glove. I have picked them up. Then I have seen the madman. His hair is long and hangs over his eyes. His arms are long, too, and they swing so and so." Baylerot swung his great arms from side to side synchronously.

"Antonio Dioguardi!" Ballinger and Felice exclaimed together.

"I do not know his name," continued De Baylerot. "He was standing at the end of the room, crouching like one wild beast, and staring at me with eyes blazing. I do not wish to go back and am seeck. I do not wish the encounter. Consequently I have hurried away. And I have carried your hat and your so leeftle glove with me, mademoiselle. As I go down the stairs I am surprised that I am still holding them in my hand. I cannot take them with me on the street. I will not throw them away and, seeck as I am, I do not wish to go back and risk an encounter with one such madman as I have just seen. So I leave them—the hat and the leetle glove—with the gentleman there, and go with my heavy heart into the street. But as I walk I think with the thought that you, my so dear Felice, would be in trouble—that I have left you at the mercy of a madman. So I return and I go in one drug store and send a message to the police. Afterwards I return and make my humble explanations as best I can of my so great humiliation to Madame Bonner, who has prepared a wedding supper which I am compelled to eat alone. But you have come back. I forgive all. We will drive at once to the minister. The license is here."

He patted his chest and put the door of the taxi and sat down in the little front seat which Ballinger lowered for him. Felice, standing, gave the chauffeur the address of the minister's house that they drove, but to the police station, where, presently, De Baylerot was recalling the story with the help of Ballinger's prompting.

When he had finished, Kirk Ballinger turned to the chief.

"The man whom Monsieur de Baylerot saw in Lindsey's studio answers the description of an Italian model named Antonio Dioguardi, who has been hanging about the Kensett building for the past fortnight, looking for work. A week or two ago he engaged a model for Clarke Lindsey. He called at my studio only last week. He had not had work for some time. He said his name was Antonio Dioguardi, and he lives at — MacDougal street."

The chief wrote down the number and handed it to one of several officers who had heard De Baylerot's story. "Bring him back with you," he said briefly.

"And may we speak to Mr. Horner?" asked Felice, the color flooding her face.

"Certainly. But why—"

It was a strange little party that Larry found as he entered the chief's room. Felice, in the sheer white dress and shabby cape, one hand and forearm bare, the other incased in a long white glove, her hair red-brown, the little hat with the flame-colored flower a trifle askew. And, beside her, towering above her like a great Monster, Arsene de Baylerot, immaculately dressed in his frock coat and gray trousers, his hair plastered in two black curls on either side of his forehead, the white gardenia, still amazingly fresh, in his buttonhole. And Ballinger, gray and worn-looking, in his eyes a new wistful expression that remained in them for many days. She looked a man who has glimpsed Heaven and seen the doors close in her face.

Felice, you here!" Altho he spoke to the girl Larry's indignant eyes were upon Ballinger.

"She would come when she heard you were in trouble."

"But I don't understand. She may involve herself in all sorts of unpleasantness."

She slipped her hand into Kirk Ballinger's arm, shrinking from Larry's stern eyes.

"I am not afraid, Larry." A soft color flooded her face. "And as for unpleasantness—no unpleasantness is hard to face when it is for one——" She paused, her eyes lowered, one little foot tapping.

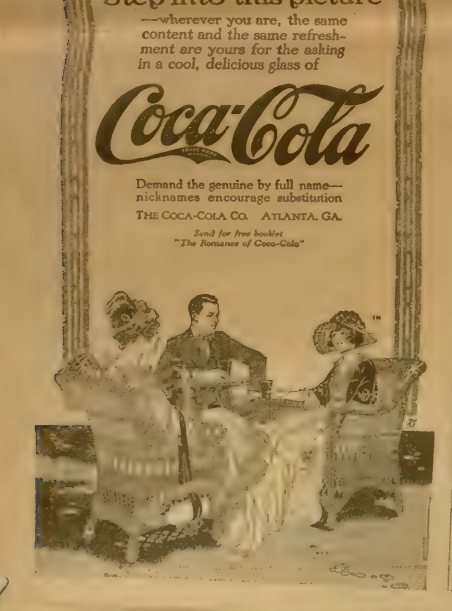
"Good Heavens, Horner! Are you blind or just plain stupid?" gasped Ballinger.

"What do you mean?"

"Look and see."

Ballinger stepped back, making at the same time a little gesture in the direction of Ma'm'selle Felice. "Does a man have to be told when——"

And Larry Horner looked, saw the color rise and recede in the girl's cheeks, read the shy declaration in her eyes, and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Want FREE Offer REPEATED

H. SPROUT
Specialist in Ear Troubles

Within the last few days, many Deaf people have asked me to repeat the free offer which I made in Review Wrinkles last July to all Deafness sufferers.

The letters have been filled with the most pitiful appeals for help. They have told me of the terrible loneliness, the cruel isolation and the suffering of the sufferer from the active quarantine of the silent life. "I would rather die, Doctor, than be Deaf, but I know I am doomed" is the burden of many a letter.

Were I to think of only this side of the picture I should be desperate. But almost every one of the letters contained also this: "A friend of mine was cured of Deafness by your treatment. Please repeat again that offer of your Free Treatment. For, you see, that is how my method. Surely what you have done for others you can do for me."

I have sent the Free treatments. I know only too well with what heartburnings of discouragement the person with the chief occasional noises in the ear—the occasional Deaf—notes the gradual loss of keen hearing—realizes that he or she is slowly, but surely, being ostracized in a tomb of silence, none the less horrible because of the fore-warning. And I am grateful as I am to help these friends of my cured patients, I cannot feel that I have again

TO ALL WHO ARE DEAF

I will give away Free Treatment for Deafness to every Deaf person who asks for it.

You who are Deaf—don't hesitate—don't delay, but get pen and ink—get a penny—write me a postal—get a postcard—but Do the thing—

Send me your Free treatment for Deafness—Also your full name and address and send it to me—

When you have sent me your name I will send one of the treatments free. My treatment has restored good hearing to many people whose Deafness was of 30 years standing.

It doesn't matter how slight your Deafness is—how severe it is—how long you have had it—send for a treatment. Many have been cured who thought their cases hopeless. I won't tell you more about my success. I want you to see for yourself—note its results in your own case. If you had answered my previous offer you might have now been in the blessed possession of good hearing. Don't let this opportunity pass. Write right now for a Deafness Treatment. It is Free. Write

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reached out his arms. But Felice drew back from him, giving him her fingertips, then withdrawing them instantly.

"Felice!" cried Larry Horner, and there was no mistaking the ring of happiness in his voice. "You care"

She nodded

And in a flash that was a revelation, Larry Horner understood; knew why Felice did not treat him with the tender affection that she had given to others, realized that when at last she kissed him it would be her first kiss of love, and heedless of De Baylerot, of the chief, of Ballinger, he reached out and drew her to him.

She shrank from him, turning her face away, while Ballinger, chilled as if by a sudden draft of cold air, laid a hand on the arms of De Baylerot and the chief, drawing them to one side

"Felice—sweetheart!" whispered Larry. "Kiss me!"

"I cannot, Larry. I am afraid!"

For at last Felice was awakened. As Lydia Armstrong would have put it, she had become sex-conscious in that moment when Larry Horner reached out and, taking her hands, tried to draw her into his arms.

"Felice," he pleaded, but she shook her head, then raised her face, and Larry knew the kiss in her eyes was his wherever her lips might be.

It was perhaps five minutes later that they brought Antonio Dioguardi to the station

"Ah!" he exclaimed, cowering, when he clapped eyes on the great figure of Monsieur de Baylerot. "Again, that so terrible a giant!" Then, glimpsing Felice, he braced up, pulled off his cap, and made some ineffectual passes over his hair. "Mia carissima! Mia piccola bellissima!" he exclaimed extravagantly. "To see you again! Che buona fortuna! Che felicita! Oh, how have I adora you, my leetle signorina! My beautiful one!"

Felice shrank from him, drawing her cape about her shoulders, and Kirk Ballinger, with a shudder, recalled the words of Lydia Armstrong. "When you get to the bottom of this thing you will find Felice Oliver."

It seemed incredible. And yet—was it?

He approached the Italian and spoke to him in his own language. The unkempt creature turned toward him with a look of gratitude, and the next moment was pouring out his story, rambling, incoherent confession, interrupted by protestations of his undying affection for his adored, his beautiful signorina.

From it Kirk managed to gather the main points in the tragedy and to translate them to the officers, discreetly omitting all mention of Felice whenever it was possible.

Dioguardi had for years posed off and on for Clarke Lindsey, and, at odd times, when unable to get work as a model, had taken care of Lindsey's rooms. It was during one of these periods that he had come to know Felice Oliver, the Madonna-faced signorina," as he called her, interrupting his story to beseech Heaven to bless her with every mercy), and to tell how she had permitted him to show her how to mix a salad and to cook spaghetti as only those born in Venezia knew. And she had laughed with him! The memory of it had been like wine in his veins. It kindled his eyes and apostrophized her beautiful throat and tender eyes, her feet which flew, and her white arms and hands that he longed to, yet dared not, kiss.

Kirk's color rose as he listened to the man's rhapsodies, and he thanked Heaven that he, alone, understood his language. And all of the time Lydia Armstrong's words drummed at the back of his mind

Dioguardi grew more and more excited as he continued, telling how the lovely signorina had suddenly stopped coming to Clarke Lindsey's to pose. He told how he had not kept his whereabouts to see her, for he adored her as he adored the Virgin. He had begged Lindsey to tell him where she lived, so that he might see her as she passed in the street. But Lindsey would tell him nothing, and had ordered him from his studio

Afterward he had gone many times to Lindsey to beseech him to tell him her what had become of the girl or to let him sit in silent adoration before her picture. Lindsey had cursed him and sent him away. But he still had the key to Lindsey's rooms, and he conceived the idea of stealing into the studio to look at the picture when Lindsey was out. But Lindsey seldom went out, and presently Dioguardi became obsessed with the idea of getting possession of the portrait. He made a shrine for it, before which he would burn candles. He no longer looked for work, but spent his days and nights loitering in the neighborhood of the Kensall building waiting for his chance.

Tonight he had seen no light in Lindsey's rooms, and had gone on [illegible] looked the door, and entered. He had [illegible] on, and Clarke Lindsey had appeared at the head of the stairs. He remembered nothing after that until he found himself standing over Lindsey, who seemed to be dead. He would have secured the picture then, but his hands were bloodstained. He went to the kitchen, ette to wash them, and almost immediately he had heard the voice of his adored one. Dioguardi had his face in his hands and sobbed. Not because of the crime he had committed, but because, in his panic of fear, he had let Felice get away by seeing her.

After she had gone he had washed his hands and had gone again into the studio for the purpose of removal of the picture from its frame. This time De Baylerot interrupted him, to the affright at the advent of the huge Frenchman he had forgotten, for the time being, even the portrait, of Felice's sacrifice, and had made his escape, returning to his own rooms, where they had found him weeping before the shrine

It was on o'clock when the story was finished. With a sigh of relief Kirk Ballinger turned to Felice while Police

"Mrs. Armstrong is waiting," he said, and held out his hand

"With your forgive me, Mr Ballinger" she murmured, giving him the tips of her fingers. "And will you ask Antonio Dioguardi to forgive me, too? I did not understand until tonight and—and not because of that——" She shook her head

"Yes, me, dear," said Larry Horner, gen[illegible] and drew her hand thru his arm [illegible] "Antonio Dioguardi," she said "stood night, dear little Felice." Kirk answered

"Good night, Monsieur de Baylerot "There was a new reserve in her manner that told Kirk more than words could have done Felice was awakened at last. In future there would be no more indiscriminate yielding to impulses toward tenderness

For a moment, after the door had closed upon her and Larry, Kirk stood host in reflection Felice had gone her happy way leaving in her wake the victims of what Lydia Armstrong had

BLIND MILTON DICTATING TO HIS DAUGHTER
From the original by Munkacsy, in New York Public Library

The Vision of the Blind

"Thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

Was the spirit of prophecy upon John Milton when, more than two hundred and fifty years ago, he dictated those words to his daughter?

Did the "blind poet" have a vision of the millions of telephone messages speeding instantly over hundreds and thousands of miles of wire spanning the continent?

"They also serve who only stand and wait." The Bell Telephone is your servant even while it "only stands and waits." The whole system is always prepared and ready for your instant command.

Every wire and switchboard and telephone instrument is kept alive and responsive by an army of telephone workers.

Each one has his special part to do and, because he does it faithfully, countless messages speed throughout the length and breadth of the land, at every minute of the day and night.

AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES
One Policy *One System* *Universal Service*

SPECIAL

Would You Accept This 30 Day Offer?

Thin Model — 17 Jewel

Standard of the World. Endorsed by Govern ment and Railway Officials. Here's a guaranteed 20 year case-adjustment every-need-it plan enables you to own this superb 21-jewel 916 thin model

17-JEWEL ELGIN $12.50

Now, during this Special Sale, is the time to save a third to a half on the high-grade Elgin. Thoroughly factory tested, guaranteed 25 years, engraved or plain polished case, with your own monogram, and our advertising offer is to send you this fine 17-Jewel Elgin at this ridiculously low price, free of charge for your inspection and approval and if you want to keep it, you pay the small, easy terms of

No Money DOWN $2—A—Month

We do this because we want to prove to you that the great volume of our business is built entirely upon satisfaction rather than any other watch or diamond house in the world and that on this particular watch, we save you nearly half, for it sells regularly at $20.00 to $22.00.

We Don't Want You To Send One Cent—Not a penny. Merely give us your full name and address that we may send you the watch. If you like it on approval. And if, after examining it, you don't want to keep it, send it back at our expense. You assume no risk. You place the watch, pay or pay one cent until you have decided. We right to our own benefit, and we take not one cent of your money unless entirely satisfied.

3 Fine Books FREE!

Mr. HARRIS wants to send you three latest BOOKS—Facts about the [illegible] Watches—all about the [illegible] Watches—all about the [illegible] Watches—all

[illegible]alled her unl[illegible] Kirk sighed and [illegible]rned to Monsieur de B[illegible]erot.

We might as well go home, mon-[illegible] said.

De Baylerot nodded, [illegible] stepped into the street [illegible] ...nger. "She was like [illegible] mattered [illegible]

[illegible] when I was dying. She nursed me, and when I was suffering most she leaned over and kissed me. She said she would do whatever I asked that would make me happier, and I asked her to marry me. Well, I wish for her only happiness, altho my heart is forever broken. She gave me Heaven for a day."

"And for three hours she gave me youth," murmured Ballinger under his breath. 'For what came afterward she is not to blame. She did not know. It is the fault of the times."

The End.

* * *

His First Name Is Fortune.

"Hunter tells me he is going to marry an heiress. I asked him her age and he couldn't tell me."

"Oh, it isn't her age Hunter is interested in, it's her heritage."

* * *

Common Inheritance.

"The world owes me something."

"Well, you'll probably collect those ills that flesh is heir to."

Classified Want Ads

Classified Want Ad Information

The rate for one insertion in Chicago Ledger and one insertion in The Saturday Blade is 30 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size of ad or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next.

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500 N. Dearborn St. CHICAGO, ILL.

SALESMEN WANTED

TRAVELING SALESMEN WANTED—EX-[illegible] eight weeks' time required. Steady positions. [illegible] Hundreds of good positions open. [illegible] A Knight of the [illegible] hundreds of [illegible] ed in positions paying [illegible] Address Dept. B-37, [illegible] Training Association, Chicago, New York, San F[illegible]

AGENTS WANTED

AGENTS—YOUR OPPORTUNITY IS RIGHT [illegible] Aluminum Ware. Our sales plan [illegible] appoint- [illegible] are [illegible] $40.00 [illegible] Magazine [illegible] stand prosperity. [illegible] secure your choice [illegible] American Aluminum Co., Lemont, Ill.

AGENTS MAKE BIG MONEY. THE BEST line of food fl[illegible] net preparations, [illegible] popular price [illegible] big demand—[illegible] big repeaters. Over 100% profit [illegible] fits furnished free to [illegible] today. American Products Co., [illegible] Cincinnati, O.

AGENTS MAKE A DOLLAR A HOUR IN-[illegible] a day. Sell Mendets, the [illegible] for instantly mending [illegible] brass, copper [illegible] and rubber goods without heat, solder, or rivet. Sample package and handsome catalog of fast selling specialties free. [illegible] Co., Dept. 707B, Amsterdam, [illegible]

BIG TEXTILE MILLS WANT AMBITIOUS men and women everywhere to show late dress fabrics, neckwear, hosiery [illegible] 400 styles. Easy [illegible] making over [illegible] complete sample outfit [illegible] Mills, 18 Remsen St.

MINUTES PAY DOLLARS DEMONSTRATING [illegible] Adding Machine. Wonderful [illegible] subtracts, multiplies. Work [illegible] hine. Five-Year Guarantee. [illegible] Enormous demand. Write [illegible] rial offer and protected territory. [illegible] Corporation, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

WE WILL PAY YOU $120.00 FOR CON-[illegible] work in your own community. 60 [illegible] less. Man or woman. No capital [illegible] Opportunity for promotion. Spare time may be used. Full particulars free. International Press, 410 Winston Bldg., Phila.

PORTRAITS, MEDALLIONS, PHOTO PILLOW tops, luminous crucifix, photo plates, [illegible] sheet pictures, papier mache frames, etc. Lowest prices, rejects credited, prompt shipments, 30 days' credit, catalog and samples free. Jas. C. Bailey, Desk M-2, Chicago.

AGENTS—HUGE OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU. Philham Laundry Wonder revolutionizes [illegible] Co-operation selling plan, low price [illegible] ck repeats, insure whopping income. [illegible] tory rights. Philham Mfg. Co., 804 [illegible] th St., St. Louis, Mo.

GUARANTEED HOSIERY SELLING FROM [illegible] earns $5 a day for our representatives. [illegible] or exp. needed. Permanent position [illegible] sive territory. B. Weber Mills, [illegible] town Sta., Phila., Pa.

AGENTS: SELL SAFETY FIRST JAR opener. Revolving knife loosens rubber ring. One agent sold 73 first day. Sample 15 cents. Circulars free. Domestic Utilities Co., Fort Madison, Iowa.

MINTON'S IRON, RUST, MI[illegible] AND INK remover, vanishes stains [illegible] tail 25c, profit 15c; 10c [illegible] rking outfit. Minton Chemical Co., [illegible] as Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa.

GET DAVIS' LATEST PROPOSITION, BEST yet. $15.00 daily a cinch. No matter how many times you have answered my advertisements in last 20 years, write again. Davis, Dept. 508, 200 N. Peoria St., Chicago.

$150.00 SALARY FOR 60 DAYS' WORK paid woman or man in each town to distribute free circulars, and take orders for [illegible] Ribbon Concentrated Flavoring. J. S. [illegible] Co., 731 E. Harrison St., Chicago.

AGENTS — COOPER MADE $314 LAST month, $91 last week, selling "Kantleak" Raincoats. New proposition. We deliver and [illegible] Sample Coat Free. Comer Mfg. Co., [illegible] St., Dayton, Ohio.

LARGE MANUFACTURER WANTS REPRESENTATIVES to sell shirts, underwear, ho-[illegible] dresses, waists, skirts, direct to homes. [illegible] for free samples. Madison Mills, 586 Broadway, New York City.

SUIT $3.75, PANTS $1.00, MADE TO measure. For even a better offer than this write and ask for free samples and styles. Knickerbocker Tailoring Co., Dept. 514, Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS TO SELL MEN'S HATS DIRECT from the Factory. Send for Catalog. B. S. [illegible] Manufacturing Co., Morristown, New [illegible]

AGENTS [illegible] A NEW SOAP GAME [illegible] stuff; 100% [illegible] free. Wri[illegible]

MEN AND WOMEN—$1500 TO $3000 YEARLY [illegible] for over [illegible]

$10 PER 1,000 ALLOWED DISTRIBUTING free soap samples. Pocket Soap [illegible] Lebanon, N[illegible]

HELP WANTED

CHIROPRACTIC DOCTORS MAKE LARGE incomes; our graduates earn $3,000 to $6,000 yearly; be independent; work for yourself; this big paying profession easily learned by correspondence; special rates now; illustrated book free. American University, Dept. 31, [illegible] N. Dearborn St., Chicago.

MEN, WOMEN WANTED EVERYWHERE. U. S. Government Jobs. $75.00 to $150.00 month. Vacations. Common education sufficient. Write immediately for free list of positions now obtainable. Franklin Institute, Dep't. O 30, Rochester, N. Y.

LADY OR GENTLEMAN TO TRAVEL FOR old established firm. No canvassing. Staple line. $18 weekly, pursuant to contract. Expenses advanced. G. K. Nichols, Philadelphia, Pa., Pepper Bldg.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yours [illegible] to buy, sell or exchange goods or services, are offered here.

MEN—BECOME CHAUFFEURS. $25 WEEK. Learn while earning. Sample lessons free. Franklin Institute. Dep't. O 810, Rochester, N. Y.

$25 WEEKLY COLLECTING NAMES AND addresses. Send stamp. Superba Co., W52, [illegible]

MALE HELP WANTED

WANTED. MEN AND WOMEN TO QUALIFY for Government positions. Several thousand appointments to be made next few months. Full information about openings, how to prepare, etc., free. Write immediately for booklet CG. 1034. Earl Hopkins, Washington, D. C.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAY MAIL, POST OFFICE, rural carrier "exams" everywhere soon. Get prepared by former Government civil service examiner. Booklet free. Arthur Robert Patterson, Rochester, N. Y.

NO STRIKE: HONEST, SOBER MEN everywhere for firemen, brakemen, baggagemen. $120 monthly. Promotion. Experience unnecessary. 686 Railway Bureau, East St. Louis, Ills.

I WILL START YOU EARNING $4 DAILY at home, silvering mirrors, free instructive booklet. G. F. Redmond, Dept. 400, Boston, Mass.

RAILWAY MAIL CLERKS WANTED. Commence $75.00 month. Sample examinations questions free. Franklin Institute, Dep't. O 170, Rochester, N. Y.

GOVERNMENT EXAMINATIONS — THOROUGH instruction, $5. Returned if not appointed. Particulars free. American Civil Service School, Washington, D. C.

BE A DETECTIVE. EARN FROM $150.00 to $300.00 per month; travel over the world. Write C. T. Ludwig, 320 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

SILVERING MIRRORS, PLATING TABLE-[illegible] Home booklet plans free. Clarence Sprinkle, Dept. 2, Marion, Ind.

BE DETECTIVE: OPERATE OWN LOCALITY or travel. Experience unnecessary. Norton Detective Agency, Norton, Va.

GOVERNMENT FARMERS NEEDED. BIG salaries. Permanent job. Light work. Write, Ozment, 68F, St. Louis, Mo.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

WANTED—WOMEN TO LEARN DRESSMAKING at home. Be better dressed than ever at half cost. Write immediately for free sample lessons from correspondence dressmaking course. Franklin Institute, Dressmaker O 8, Rochester, N. Y.

REFINED WOMEN WANTED TO INTRODUCE Priscilla Fabrics, Hosiery, Underwear, Dresses, in sp[illegible] Fa[illegible] plan. Write for samples. [illegible] pany Department 126, Trenton, New Jersey.

LADIES EARN BIG MONEY TAKING ORDERS for Dr. Sawyer's Remedies. Established [illegible] 177 No. State St., Dept. 8, Chicago, Ill.

FIVE BRIGHT, CAPABLE LADIES TO travel, demonstrate and sell dealers. $25 to $50 per week. Railroad fare paid. Goodrich Drug Company, Dept. 85, Omaha, Neb.

WANTED—APRON MAKERS, SEND twenty cents. Returned if dissatisfied. [illegible] od Shops, 4708 Ellis Ave., Chicago.

WANTED—DUST CAPS MADE. SEND 20c; returned if dissatisfied. Household Garment Company, 4708 Ellis Ave., Chicago.

HELP WANTED—Male and Female

$20 TO $35 PER MONTH EXTRA MONEY [illegible] without interfer[illegible] selling, no canvassing [illegible] Unemployed need [illegible] Inc., [illegible] Chicago, Ill.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

INVEST $10—MAY MAKE FORTUNE! OIL is making millions for investors in Great Southern Oil Fields. Single wells have produced upwards of $15,000 daily. Small monthly payments secure Big interest with us in Oil properties where we plan to drill many wells. Write for maps and literature. Great Southern Oil Association, 1300 Carter Bldg., Houston, Texas.

DON'T INVEST IN OIL UNTIL YOU READ the Texas Investor; gives valuable information and facts about the rich Texas oil fields and tells how to invest small sums to get quick action. Send your name and address and I'll send it 3 months free. C. C. Cannan, Publisher, 661 Chronicle Bldg., Houston, Tex.

$15 INVESTED MAY MAKE $1,000 YEARLY. Gets warranty deed, also interest in co-operative oil well we're getting ready to drill in big gusher oil territory. $1 cash, $1 monthly; 4 lots short time, $56. Particulars free. Triangle Oil Co., 407 Carter Bldg., Houston, Texas.

FORTUNES IN OIL. FREE SHARES WITH payments $2 monthly. Paying oil production in six months or money back. Particulars. Write Progressive Oil Syndicate, 303 First National Bank Bldg., Houston, Texas.

REAL ESTATE

A SMALL FARM IN CALIFORNIA WILL make you more money with less work. You will live longer and better. Delightful climate. Rich soil. Hospitable neighbors. Good roads, schools and churches. Write for our San Joaquin Valley illustrated folders free. C. L. Seagraves, Industrial Commissioner, AT&SF Ry., 1931 Ry. Exch., Chicago.

FARMS WANTED

FARMS WANTED—HAVE 4,000 BUYERS, describe your unsold property. 504 Farmers Exchange, Denver, Colo.

FARM LANDS FOR SALE

YOU CAN DO BETTER ON A SOUTHERN farm. Send for a year's subscription free to our beautifully illustrated magazine, The Southern Homeseeker, which tells all about good, low priced land and southern opportunities. Write F. H. LaBaume, Agri. Agt., N. & W. Ry, 248 Arcade Bldg., Roanoke, Va.

FARMS FOR SALE

POOR MAN'S CHANCE — $5 MONTHLY buys 40 acres, productive land, near town. Price $200. Other Bargains. Box 425-S, Carthage, Mo.

FOR SALE

300 THEATRE SEATS, LIKE NEW, 40 cents each. M. Samuels, 2262 So. State St., Chicago.

NAMES

WE PAY 25c EACH FOR NAMES AND ADdresses. Send dime for contract. Directory, Grand Rapids, Mich.

SHORT STORIES WANTED

WRITERS!—STORIES, POEMS, PLAYS, etc., are wanted for publication. Literary Bureau, R4, Hannibal, Mo.

INVENTIONS

INVENTIONS COMMERCIALIZED ON CASH and royalty basis. Inventors and manufacturers write at once. Adam Fisher Mfg. Co., 2044 Railway Exchange, St. Louis, Mo.

MOVING PICTURE BUSINESS

MAKE MONEY QUICK—IN MOVING PICture business. We start you and furnish guaranteed outfit on easy payment plan. No experience needed. Catalog free. Monarch Film Service, 228 Union Ave., Dept. C, Memphis, Tenn.

$35.00 PROFIT NIGHTLY. SMALL CAPITAL starts you. No experience needed. Our machines are used and endorsed by Government institutions. Catalog Free. Atlas Moving Picture Co., Franklin Bldg., Chicago.

MOTION PICTURE MACHINES BOUGHT and sold. Bargain lists free. National Equipment Company, Duluth, Minn.

SONG POEMS

SONG WRITERS' "KEY TO SUCCESS" free! We compose and facilitate free pu[illegible] [illegible] or sale. Submit poems. Knickerbocker Studios, 112 Gaiety Bldg., New York.

SONG POEMS WANTED—FOR BEST OFFER submit manuscript to Needham Music Co., [illegible]

MOTION PICTURE PLAYS

WRITE PHOTOPLAYS; $25-$300 PAID. EXperience unnecessary; details free to new writers. Producers League, 400, St. Louis.

HONEY

BEST QUALITY NEW CLOVER HONEY. 30 lb. can $3.60, two or more cans, $3.45 each. Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded. Sample 10 cts. Price list free. M. V. Facey, Preston, Minn.

TRAPPERS

SEND FOR FREE COPY OF OUR TRAPpers' Guide and particulars of our Free Gift to Trappers. Hill Bros. Fur Co., 450 N. Main St., St. Louis, Mo.

SHORTHAND

INTERNATIONAL UNIGRAPH IS THE most rapid, readable system, and most quickly learned. First Lesson Papers 10c. Unigraph School, F J 271, Princeton, N. J.

PATENTS

PATENTS SECURED OR FEE RETURNED. Actual search and patentability report free. Send sketches and description, or model, of your invention. My patent sales service gets full value. 1916 Edition ninety-page patent book free. George P. Kimmel, 260 Barrister Building, Washington, D. C.

WANTED, AN IDEA! WHO CAN THINK of some simple thing to patent? Protect your ideas, they may bring you wealth. Write for "Needed Inventions," "Patent Buyers," and "How to Get Your Patent and Your Money." Randolph & Co., Patent Attorneys, Dept. 174, Washington, D. C.

"PATENTS AND PATENT POSSIBILITIES" is a 72-page treatise telling what to invent and where to sell it. Manufacturers constantly writing for patents. Help supply the demand. Books free. H. S. Hill, 933 McLachlan Building, Washington, D. C.

PATENTS SECURED OR FEE REFUNDED, and advertised for sale at our expense. Books, search and advice free. Pattison and Co., Patent Attorneys, 904 G Street, Washington, D. C.

THE PATENTOME IS FREE. AN EDUCATION in obtaining patents. Established 1865. Anderson & Son, Attorneys, 713 7th St., Washington, D. C.

PERSONAL

CUT THIS OUT QUICK, MAILING IT BACK within ten days, and we will tell you how you can secure two years' membership in our Club, free, which will entitle you to thousands of addresses of wealthy, refined, handsome ladies desiring early marriage. Write quick enclosing some postage for large collection beautiful photos and descriptions of ladies of means. Sincere Club, B 420, Valley, Nebr.

MEN ON THE DOWN GRADE, WITH Lame Back, Despondency, Failing Memory, Loss of Ambition, unfitting you for work or business. Remember we are specialists in all diseases of men. Book, symptom blank and advice free, sealed. Hinze Medical Institute, 22 Washington Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minn.

MARRY RICH. BE HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS. Big list of descriptions and photos of congenial people with means free. Sealed, confidential. Either sex. Standard Club, Box 607, Grayslake, Ill.

MARRY—FREE PHOTOS, BEAUTIFUL ladies; descriptions and directory; pay when married. New Plan Co., Dept. 21, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY WITH photos and description free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 28, Kansas City, Mo.

MEN, IF NERVOUS, WEAK, RUN DOWN, write today for a trial package of Herculin, the wonderful upbuilding tonic. M. Oswald Co., 318 West 42d St., New York.

ARTISTS MODELS, BATHING GIRLS, PAjama girls, real photos. Send dime for samples and list. Art Studios, 18 Bowdoin St., Boston.

WIDOW—WORTH $120,000, OR MORE, [illegible] marry. "I dare you write." (Sincere.) [illegible] nity, San Francisco.

BUSINESS MAN, WORTH $75,000, WILL marry. (Write me quick.) "Lewis," 7 4th St., San Francisco.

GO ON THE STAGE. EXCELLENT CHANCE to travel. Circular free. D. P. Green, Box 213, Mason, Michigan.

ECZEMA SUFFERERS SEND $1.00 FOR MY experience. Cure yourself at home. [illegible] 111, Ingersoll, Ontario, Canada.

MARRY RICH—BE PROSPEROUS AND happy. Write New Home Club, Los Angeles, Cal.

MARRIAGE PAPER FREE. BEST PUB-[illegible] Agency [illegible], Bridgeport, Connecticut.

LOOK! LOOK! LOOK! MONEY, MONEY, money. Key free. Inquire L. Bryant, 2953 Ellis Ave., Chicago, Ill.

GET MARRIED — BEST MATRIMONIAL paper published. Mailed free. The Correspondent, Toledo, Ohio.

MARRY RICH; HUNDREDS ANXIOUS TO marry. Descriptions and photos free. E. Unity, Grand Rapids, Mich.

MARRY: MANY RICH, PARTICULARS free. P. Morrison, 3053 W. Holden, Seattle, Washington.

EXCHANGE CARDS, LETTERS, PHOTOS. [illegible] friendship club. Membership 10c. Jolly [illegible] Decatur, Indiana.

"MARRY—10,000 WORTH [illegible] TO $100,000; paper 10c, sealed. B. W. Love, Box [illegible]

OLDEST, LARGEST CLUB, 60,000 MEMbers, free. Mrs. Wrubel, Box 26, Oakland, California.

LADY VERY LONELY. WORTH $40,000. Will marry. Write GG., Box 4, San Diego, Cal.

Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 7th, 1887, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

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By W. D. BOYCE CO., CHICAGO, ILL.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

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BACK NUMBERS.

Back numbers of the Ledger promptly mailed. Always give the dates desired, plainly written, accompanied by your full address. Price, 5 cents per copy.

ADVERTISING RATES.

For Display, $2.50 each Agate Line; for Classified, 50 cents a word, per insertion for a circulation of the Chicago Ledger and The Saturday Blade combined. These two weeklies have an average circulation of

5,000,000

READERS WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS.

Most of the budding geniuses get nipped in the bud.

Many a man has made a fortune by not writing poetry.

Skin deep beauty is all right—if the girl has the money.

In order to hold his job a diplomat must hold his tongue.

A man may bow to the inevitable, but he doesn't lift his hat.

You might do worse than exaggerate the goodness of your friends.

A bore is a person who has nothing to do but sit around and visit.

There are but few unhappy marriages. The unhappiness shows up later.

Comparatively little work can convince a man that he needs a rest.

A girl who flirts is like a counterfeit coin—she never gets the true ring.

No, Cordelia, a bee is not necessarily so angry when it stings as the victim is.

Go ahead when you think you're right, but don't expect the crowd to follow you.

Be sure the gun is loaded before attempting to teach the young idea how to shoot.

Some people seem to go to church for the purpose of obtaining a new supply of gossip.

Even the man who admits that he cannot only one fish may lie about its weight.

A prude is sometimes a woman who noses around for something to get shocked at.

A woman doesn't object to hearing a man praise another woman—if the other woman is dead.

A flirt usually begins to lose interest in a man after she gets him to admit that he loves her.

To a good woman a lover's jealousy is a homage, but to a good wife a husband's jealousy is an insult.

Occasionally a man succeeds in getting in on the ground floor only to find that the elevator isn't running.

It is jealousy in women that makes them say mean things behind your back, but in men it is pure cussedness.

The man who sits around and boasts of his bravery is usually the first to hike for the tall timber when danger threatens.

It's well enough to put your trust in Providence, but it's unwise to go around looking for holes for Providence to pull you out of.

Compression of the waist is said to be harmful, but if the right young man makes the attempt the average girl is willing to take chances.

Home and Health

FASHION NOTES.

Dark blue promises to be as smart as ever.

Blue and black striped silks are much in evidence.

White beaded nets are very popular for evening gowns

Flesh-colored organdie is much liked now for afternoon frocks.

Bands of glass beads form shoulder straps and other pretty addenda.

One unusual frock had an apron of satin in front and back—the gown itself being of taffeta.

The Spanish influence in the current modes is seen in the vogue for black lace both for trimming and as fetching veils.

Gray is a favorite color in the gloves of the year. There are heavy gray suede gloves, there are dressed kid gloves in gray and there are gray washable fabric gloves, all smart in appearance.

RECIPES.

RED CABBAGE, CELERY SALAD—Have a fine and firm red cabbage, trim off all outside leaves, cut the inner portion into quarters and remove the stalks. Cut the rest into fine shreds and add to it in the salad bowl a head of celery cut into inch pieces. Make a dressing by beating one egg, stirring into it gradually a tablespoon of salad oil, a tablespoon of red wine vinegar, a pinch of sugar and mustard, salt and pepper. Pour over the cabbage and celery, garnish with sliced gherkins and capers. A grating of cheese adds to this.

GRANDMOTHER'S POUND CAKE—One cup of butter, packed solid. One and two-thirds cups granulated sugar, half teaspoon mace. Five unbeaten eggs, two cups sifted flour, two cups a round pan, greased and floured; the oven ready and ingredients measured, as the mixing must be done by hand. Cream the butter and sugar and work till very light; add spice and one egg at a time and stir with the hand until you do not see any of the egg yolk, then add another egg and so on until they are all used. Add the flour, a little and turn at once into the pan and bake slowly about an hour. The grain of the cake should be fine and close, with not a suspicion of any toughness or heaviness, not porous like a cake made light with gas from soda and cream of tartar or by long beating, and yet soft, fine, light and velvety. This texture is obtained by very slow blending of the butter and sugar and not overbeating the eggs.

HONEYCOMB PUDDING—Beat together one-half cup of sugar and one cup molasses and one and one-half cups flour. Heat one-half cup of milk and one-half cup of butter, then add one teaspoon of soda. Combine the mixture and beat thoroly. Add four well-beaten eggs and beat again. Steam in a buttered pudding mold three hours, or bake one hour and a half hours. Serve with creamy sauce.

NEEDLEWORK.

To obtain a true bias place the material flat on a cutting table and with a ruler or a yardstick laid across one corner draw a line with chalk or colored pencil. Use this line for a guide in cutting

Make a bag of scrim or unbleached cotton the size you wish the pillow to be, and hang it in a convenient closet. Put into the bag, from time to time, every scrap of white silk that is too small for other uses. When the bag is full, sew up the open end, cover and you will have a new cushion. Don't forget to start a new bag when you sew up the old one

You would not expect to find a description of cottage mail boxes among needlework notes, but that is exactly where these new ideas belong, for they are made with needle and thread. They are made of heavy cardboard, or a light wood, like that of cigar boxes, and covered with cretonne to match the hangings in the living-hall or dining-room. A disc of the board is first covered with cretonne. To this is joined with a puffing of cretonne a smaller disc including a bit of open space which the words "Outgoing Mail" or "Incoming Mail" are lettered. Now this should be enough of a suggestion for any number of cute holders for the mail as it arrives or is ready for the post office boxes may form the foundation of these wall pockets, which can be made as pacious as one likes, and may be covered with bits of the hangings, or with the wall paper or even painted in bright shining colors

FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

When washing silver use a wooden tub or bowl if possible There will then be less danger of the silver getting scratched.

Each time, after the garbage can has been emptied, drop into it a crushed newspaper. light it and let burn out. Place the can on the ground while burning

To clean dulled steel, rub slices of raw potato over it, then polish with a flannel cloth. If there are rust spots on the steel they may be removed by rubbing them with pumice stone or with salt wet with hot vinegar.

The blacking you put on your brown shoes when they get too shabby-looking will never show if you do it this way Mix a bit of ordinary ammonia with a half-pint of cold water. Sponge your shoes with this. Next cover them with shoe ink. Let them dry thoroly. Then polish with good black shoe dressing. This keeps the black from wearing off right away, but the shoes must be polished frequently, of course.

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Would you ever have thought it possible to pack a cabinet case into your trunk when you went away on your vacation? Well, that's exactly what you can do, for some ingenious mind has invented a wardrobe made of metal frames and figured chints which is collapsible There are two styles of cabinets. One is provided with shelves made of the cretonne and given a substantial firmness by means of thin wood strips. The cabinet is a little more than six feet high and contains four shelves. Between the shelves are the sides of the cabinet little pockets with flaps are attached. On the shelves one can keep hat boxes, dress suit case and one could even lay one's shirtwaists away on one shelf

The other cabinet is entirely without shelves. Across the top, thru the center, a metal rod is run. On this rod coat hangers may be suspended. One's frocks, coats and skirts can be hung neatly and be kept free from dust, for the front section of the cabinet can be closed and kept so by means of snap fasteners.

Odd-looking pockets are attached to the corners of the cabinet These are intended to hold such of one's shoes to fill the cabinet with one's favorite scent

Each cabinet is provided with a screw at the top and both metal pieces at the back, so that it can be suspended from the ceiling or attached to the wall

CARE OF THE HANDS.

Washing the hands in a bowl of warm milk every night is a good bleach for redness. Here is another good bleach Lemon juice, one ounce; honey, one ounce; glycerine, one ounce. This is the recipe of a famous beauty expert

If you wish to make your fingers longer and more tapering, soften them in warm water or olive oil, and then massage them with a long slow stroke from the wrist to the tips of the fingers. Then take each finger separately between the thumb and forefinger of the other hand and pull and twist gently at the sides, at the same time drawing the finger out from the hand.

If your hands are constipated, swollen appearance, with distended veins, it is sometimes a sign that you have some article of clothing too tight for your own good—a sleeve, collar or belt, perhaps. If this is not the case, the trouble is that the blood rushes to your hands too much. Form the habit of holding the hands up as much as possible instead of down at the sides. This will relieve the blood vessels of their extra burden.

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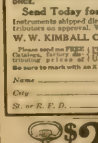

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Eck Lowrey's Luck

Or, In Quest of Douglas Beechmere

By I. M. Shepler

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Begun in No. 35, Aug. 26. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER VI

MEETING SANDY AND BILL.

ECK was glad he had come away at peace with his family. Of course, the right kind of peace with Jim was out of the question, but from across the field, as he went down to town That day, Jim had waved a hand at him, and he had waved back. Whether the wave on Jim's part was meant in friendly spirit or not Eck could not know.

At his first chance of cars, he stopped off and bought four picture postcards for back home, each appropriate for the one intended, from grandfather to Willie. He paused at one—a lawyer on a chicken-stealing case. It would hit Jim, but he turned away, ashamed that he had harbored a thought of sending it along with those others.

As Eck boarded the train that would carry him straight to his destination, he was walking straight into one of those occurrences that happen perhaps but once in one's lifetime—he was growing up warm and close to the right thread in the unraveling of a long mystery.

The car he entered was almost full. Close to the front seat on one side sat an elderly lady with an ear trumpet on her lap. She moved it to the vacant place on her seat, and Eck guessed she did not want to talk to him. In the seat back of her a slender boy of about his own age sprawled, his head out of the window, bawling to some one he was pretending to recognize as an old friend. From the top of his loud plaid cap to his yellow shoes the boy was the picture of assurance and impudence.

Directly back of him sat a workingman whom Eck judged must be past 40, for his sandy hair was showing some gray; otherwise there was a look of youthful strength about his well-knit frame. With an easy smile he moved over to give the lad part of his seat, remarking, with a Scotch burr in his speech, that the travel was heavy on this line.

As the train moved out of the station, the boy came out of the window, dusted his sleeves carefully, straightened his necktie, and as the late arrival a long stare as he did so. Looking into his deep-set, twinkling eyes, and over the oddly humorous cast of face, Eck guessed the boy to be nearer 20 than 16, and years older than that in his knowledge of the world.

A drummer came along at this instant and pushed past the boy to get through. To Eck's surprise, the boy struck up a conversation immediately with the newcomer, indicating that he, too, was on the road selling something, the what it was Eck did not catch. It was soon evident that he was boring his seatmate, and the Scotchman chuckled when the drummer got up and moved to the "smoking car."

After this came a succession of people demanding that seat. First was an old farmer. The boy began trying to gan drawing out this man to talk of *farming, and to spread himself in remarks about* the high cost of farming was quite evident he was overdrawing on his reminiscence of stock and grain yields on father's farm back East, the farmer soon made his way to the smoking car.

As others in succession took his place, the man by Eck's side smiled and observed, "Something o' an old date Ancient History, I'm thinkin', but some which they fell into an easy conversation, and while the lad revealed nothing of his business, Eck gathered from something he was afterward sorry for, his companion told him something of his future prospects in his line.

With his parents and a little sister he had come over from Scotland in his youth, and had settled down in Ohio. His parents were now gone, but he never lost sight of his sister.

"I her a letter every month, and I'm to visit a few days. Then I'm off for lumber camp to the Northern lake lands, not to return to Scotland but to Canada and our country. The boss o' one of these camps, an old friend o' mine, sent word for me to come up and take his job. He wants to go away.

You see," he went on further, "I worked much in timber, and I started first on the sheep ranches of the West. I keep away from there, lad. The lone someness of the vast plains, with the man in sight for weeks, gets on your nerves, and there's no inside like what comes of that. I had a foreboding of it once, and I cut and run for high timber. No more that life for me! I'll take the deepest forests to the wide-open land. Tho there's no man near you in the woods, there's the kind of life and feeling to keep you sane. Better come and go with me to the timber lands."

Eck shook his head in the negative, but followed with: "No telling. I might get up there."

"Then I will give the address of Sandy McFern—myself he is—for I've rather taken a notion to you, son," was the cordial return.

Half an hour afterward the train stopped at the town of Sandy's destination. Scarcely had the Scotchman said good-by to Eck before the boy in front was slipping into the vacated seat.

"Hello, Alex!" he began. "Who are you lookin' fur?"

"A fellow by the name of Douglas Beechmere. Know him?" returned Eck.

"Sure, that's my name, Douglas Beechmere. What do you want with me? Have I been doing anything that you've heard of?"

"I'll not specify until later."

Eck knew the young fellow was lying about the name. However, he let him run on in trying to pick up something between whiles. Some wonderful adventures he had lately fallen into by chance. Telling of one of these, the talkative one said forcibly:

"I yelled, 'You fellers don't get old Bill Doty in that style! No!'"

"So Bill's not your name, is it?" asked Eck, simply.

"Just about as much as yours is Alexander Lowrey, old pard. I heard you tell that man you talked so long that name. No bad name to choose quick."

Eck gave Bill Doty a long, puzzled stare, then smiled a "judge-me-by-yourself-do-you?" smile.

"Oh, you can't take it off with me in that superior way, young man. I got you spotted from nearly the first you come in the car. You'll have to go up that empty seat at the front of the car, and I'll talk' to you about it, but all the time I want to know I'm your friend all the way thru, and stand ready to help you. The old woman in the seat up there is pretty near deaf, or she wouldn't be carryin' an ear trumpet. She can't hear us talk, and across the aisle there's nothin but kids. They're not old enough to understand us. So come along, pard."

With a bland amused smile Eck followed Bill, boylike, feeling perfectly safe in any company, and really desirous of knowing whom Bill Doty thought he was.

Bill let him into the seat next to the window, and then first closed. Then, taking a part of a folded newspaper from an inside pocket in his coat, he laid it upon Eck's knees, pointing to a picture of a young man—a somewhat injured picture, yet one plain enough to get a tolerably good impression of the features

"Here you are," and Bill's voice was low. "Good likeness of you they got in the newspapers."

"There might have been a slight resemblance in my face to the dissipated picture in the paper and Eck's, but it would be natural that the latter could not have seen it and there have been. Leaning over, he read the short article below the picture. It referred to a bold holdup of a car full of passengers by a young man, and near a place not far from home town. The holdup was successful from the viewpoint of the young bandit, as the passengers generally responded and handed over all the money they had with them. He had then jumped thru a window and escaped. But it was learned that one person, a bootblack on the train, had recognized the robber as a fellow who had previously informed the authorities. This was how a good picture of him had been found, altho by way of a joke.

"You are long off your base, sonny," Eck replied, handing back the paper. "I am not the bold character by a long shot. I am inside myself if it comes to a question."

"Oh, is it?" but you are a cool head, and you've got the kind of a face that would fool folks. But here's one you can't come any game on. You and I, 'tween us, that was an easy way of gettin' money, and ever since I read it, I says to myself, 'Bill, you can do, and can you, Bill,' I got it all planned, and just where and when I'd do the work. I know this old train like I do on dozens of times. The next burg it stops at it will take on a scad of passengers coming on the Grand Canyon. This train, I figured from the papers, will be carryin' a lot of rich folks bound for some big resort to go off in Suey City tomorrow. There's our chance. Just after the lamps are lit in this train it will be goin' thru a long cut, bordered with trees. Easiest place to jump off a train, as you could jump from a window straight out on the high ground so close to the window.

"When I got on this train I planned to do this myself, just as that boy—as you did it over in Indiana. But when I see you boardin' the train, I says, 'Bill,' I says, 'there's the lad to help you. He's a professional. It's safer with two. There'll be swag enough for both.'"

Eck looked Bill steadily in the eyes, then concluded he was playing him for a country Rube, later to get the laugh on him. He boldly got up, and by force of his heavier body pushed Bill to the end of the next seat in the aisle, then, unfastening and throwing up the window, dropped heavily into the seat, saying in a low, melodramatic tone:

"Naw, you don't come any job on me. I hold the revolvers; you relieve the crowd. See, if you were looking for a certain name in and about a big city, how would you go about it?"

Bill stared at him. "What did he mean? Was that last to throw the deaf woman off? She was raising her ear trumpet to listen.

"Why, by looking in the city directory, then in the postoffice and rural route lists. See?

After that their talk drifted into short observations. At last Bill said:

"We are at the last stop before we enter the cut. The conductor takes up the tickets, turns on the lights, or has it done, then goes in a front car and takes this time to do some checking up."

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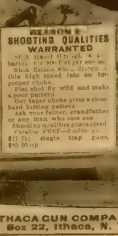

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"I understand," answered Eck, quite innocently, and did not catch on until Bill, stepping from the seat to get a drink, closed the door the conductor had left partially open. They were in an end car. There could be no trouble or interference but from one direction.

"We played it wrong. We ought to have worked from the back of the car. Then we'd had any one coming in at the door at our mercy," said Bill.

Was he still playing him? Eck wondered, as Bill slipped into the seat, leaning over as he did so to hide from those behind the revolvers he was taking from an inner pocket. At the gleam of the revolvers Eck knew that Bill was fully in earnest.

Leaning over, he whispered shrilly: "Let me hold the crowd. I can do it better than you. You will lose your nerve."

"Never! You don't know me. You take the swag."

What happened next Eck could not distinctly know. He heard Bill yell, "Hands up!" even as he struggled with him to take the revolver. One he succeeded in getting in his pocket, the other fell on the floor, and then he was struggling with Bill, who was dragging him along out thru the now open door, under the flying feet of a brakeman, then down the steps to the ground.

CHAPTER VII.

FINISH OF THE HOLDUP.

THE train, slowing down as it went thru the cut, had probably saved the boys from broken bones. Rolling down instead of jumbled up, too, been one reason why they were no more hurt than actually they were when, now a few feet apart, they paused and took an inventory of their bruises.

"You Sunday-school cad!" Bill was first to speak. "You are not Jim Samp at all."

"You bet your boots I'm not! I told you I was!" snorted Eck, "and if bein' a Sunday-school cad keeps fellows from bein' hurt, then bless the name of it! I'm sorry I let you get the gun, and I never thought you meant it. That train will be pushing back here to see what's come of us, and I'll be compelled to hand you over and tell your story, as I intended to tell it when you came to handing me and handing me until you got me off. One thing I must give you credit for, and that is for some extra strength for your size."

"Yes, and if they come back I tell your story. I'll tell them you are Jim Samp, the young gentleman wanted from Indiana, and I'll tell them you put me up to do the passengers, then tried to take the revolvers from me, and let you do the holdup while I received them. See? I will that sound on a Sunday-school goop, eh?"

"Pretty fine," Eck assented, but the chills were beginning to creep up his back.

He had not been given time to guess how bad his case might be construed. It might mean a stay in jail and a one lot of stuff to be carried back home in the newspapers. He was scared white, and considered.

"Now, men!" Where were they to what you tell? I guess they've concluded to not come back for us. Go on! I can find an officer another time."

Eck was really running a bluff. He wanted to get away from the vicinity of the track. Not for anything now did he want an investigation, for he knew his usual luck, as he looked on it, would follow. He would get all the blame.

"Ah, say now," and Bill, in front of the revolver upon which Eck now rested his hand, was getting shy and cautious, "my widowed mother lives over in Sugar City. She's a good woman, and it would kill her to know this on me. It was for her I was tryin' to raise this money. She works so hard."

Up the side of the cut they climbed, Bill leading, Eck following close behind, thru the trees, into the open ground. Then Bill ordered:

"Now start running, and don't you dare to look back, you candidate for the penitentiary! Maybe you've got a good mother, maybe you haven't, but never let me see your face again! Scoot!"

Bill started running, as Eck ordered, for the latter's own dilemma forced his voice into something like desperation, which Bill mistook for a strong desire to do him harm. He did not want to risk the strong-fisted young stranger's strength, or what he imagined he might do with the weapon.

When the shades of night had swallowed Bill, Eck crept back to the way he had gone, and cautiously made his way across the country.

As it was partly, he could see lights in the farmhouses about, and the lights from an automobile guided him to a country road. He did not know how far he had walked on this until he came to another railroad.

Voices from a station at the side of the railroad bade him pause and get out of the light of a now rising moon. There were two men, and he went up to get a hand-car out of the shack; the other stood by, groaning at intervals.

Concluding to ask the help of fear, Eck came up to the men, asking if he could be of any help.

"Sure," said the man trying to manage the hand-car alone. "Dave here, and me, were left alone in the shanty tonight. Dave went out to get a drink from a shallow open well we got here, and one of the boards across it broke and let him down. He saved himself from goin' in the well, but he broke his collar bone. What's your name, please?" as Eck pitched to help

"Alexander Campbell," said Eck. This was his name in part.

"Oh, you're the man, who was a section boss; "some of the Campbells that live down country, eh? Don't see, Dave, there's no go up to the city and have a doctor set his broken bone. The other boys are all on the holiday, so the only way is for him there only on a hand-car. Could you spare the time to help?"

"Glad to," was Eck's answer. "I do want to get on a certain depot quick as I can."

Twice, before the city was reached with the injured man, the hand-car had to be thrown from the track to let trains go by. Eck, feeling that the news of the attempted holdup might have reached the employes even of this line, kept his cap well over his face, and his head from any eye running over them as the trains whirled by.

He helped the section boss to get Dave onto a street car going past a hospital and then set out to find the station harboring his valise.

The baggage-room, in its dim light, was nearly deserted. Evading a big policeman, sleepily leaning against a post, Eck slipped in, looking about him. There, on a pile of baggage, lay his humble valise. Eck, with a sigh of relief, lit when a head bobbed up in the rear and a man called sharply: "Here, you! None of that!"

"Guess it's mine," Eck flung back, fishing the check from a pocket.

A few seconds later he was going out of the room, two steps in one, a surreptitious glance back from a corner at the stolid policeman. Then he found a cheap lodging-house and a room, six by ten, where he could spend the night.

Next morning he put on a soft hat and a different coat from the one he had worn the day before, and went out to hunt a morning paper. In one he found a brief notice of the holdup.

The conductor and brakeman interested must have been content to take the dead lady's report. She had been so frightened at first that she had dropped under her seat, and next had popped up and flung her ear trumpet at the fighting men, who had hit the bell-cord coming in at the door, sending him back and out of the way of the combatants for the moment.

When quieted somewhat by the conductor, she finally settled down to plain talk, and told him a fairly correct story of the affair. Brothers, she had guessed they were. The larger and older had taken the revolver from the younger one, who suddenly had gone crazy and tried to hold up the passengers. She believed that the older brother had got his brother off the train on purpose. He did not want him arrested. At the next station the older brother had gone back to see if harm had come to the boys. They had not been found.

Eck smiled. He was pleased that the old lady had guessed at part of the truth, tho she had assigned Bill to him as a brother.

After this he did not feel so creepy when he passed a policeman, and now rather hurried to find work. He found a spot where they wanted some bricks piled handy for the bricklayers, but when he took off his coat to go to work, one cross hod carrier demanded to see his union card.

"I've got none," Eck answered, in surprised voice. "Country workers don't have union cards."

"Why did not you stay in yer own place, then?" said the crusty carrier. "I'm not hatin' workin' fellers here."

"Here, now, Mick!" called the boss. "I'll hev none o' that out o' you! Keep yer gab out of my business. I'm short on hands today. The lad looks strong."

A gardener passing stopped to listen. "A country worker, are you?" he called in. "Climb on my wagon and go 'long with me to the suburb where I got some truck patches. I need a country worker for a couple of weeks. I'll board you and then give you as much as that man will."

The gardener laughed back at the frowning boss as Eck climbed into his wagon, and with the laugh told them to go to the dickens with their cards.

He proved a good friend to the boy, and helped him all he could in allowing him some time off to look up and interview all the factories he could find within the city limits, and when he was done with Eck let him have one of his horses at a special rate to go out the country about on some inquiring trips.

It was on the last of these trips that a very old man from whom Eck had not asked information volunteered it anyway, by declaring that he knew a Doughty Beechmere. Many years ago he had worked for him, and this Beechmere had moved into the next state, and now owned a big farm close by a small town named Clifty.

The old man seemed to possess a wonderful memory, for he could remember a lot of stuff Doug had told him about his stepmother, and how he had hunted and hunted for his lost father, all of which, later, Eck discovered the old man had merely imagined he had heard, taking his cue from the questioning put to him.

CHAPTER VIII.

CLARK BEECHMERE.

ECK counted his earnings with the gardener. They were not quite enough to get him to Clifty. He must either stop off and work two or three days, walk part of the way. Considering this last would get him there in the time it would take to earn the money needed, he voted to himself to do the walking part.

His journey ended exactly where the old fellow said it would, and the man's name was Beechmere, but not Douglas by any means. Clark, people called him to his face, when he gave him the honor of calling him anything except Beechmere; but every name this meant a tight-wad, skinflint, cheeseparer, was Clark Beechmere's behind his back.

He owned an immense lot of good

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farming land, and this required more hands than nature had endowed him with, and feet, too, the not more brains, perhaps. He required the work of two men from one, and paid lower wages than any farmer about. Because of this he was always short of hands, and those he kept were a rough, trifling, drinking lot that he housed in a long, uncomfortable shanty near the barns, and here they ate their meals, cooked and served by an old negro woman.

When Eck realized that Clark Beechmere had never heard of a Joshua Beechmere and his lost son, and, in fact, had never kept in touch with his own family, he determined to stay with him but a few days, altho the man wanted to hire him.

Eck worked with the men, and ate with them in that bunkhouse, tho the victuals were scanty and miserably cooked and served, but he could not spend his evenings with them. They played cards and drank. This he could have passed unnoticed, but the heavy, hot, smoky air of the place made him sick, and he could neither read nor sleep for the boisterous talk that often ended in quarrels and fisticuffs or murder. He was glad it was warm enough, for he could sneak up to one of the haymows and sleep, tho he was told that Clark Beechmere allowed no sleeping about his barns.

"We'll not tell on you, tho," the men assured him, "'cause you're such an obligin' chap, and if he finds it out we'll fix for you, an' swear you slept in the bunkhouse every night."

"You needn't take that trouble, boys," Eck answered back, "for I've concluded to stay here only until I make enough to go on straight to Montana. It's the eats here that are the worst. I'll be down with the lum-de-bum thumps, if I stay thru another month of that old black cat's cooking and hifalutin. She called me white trash yesterday when I gave my dinner to the dog, then wondered why he didn't have a fit after he had eaten. But say, watch me. I am going to have one square meal before I leave, and eat it with the family. I notice they are very stylish up at the big house, or try to be, since their daughter, folks say, went off to a select city school. They have a boss cook, and don't starve themselves as they do us."

"Yes, you will, and get kicked out the back door the minute you try it! It was that young lady that decided the workmen must neither eat nor sleep in the farmhouse, and she is turning over things in fine shape there in trying to make old Clark and his cross-eyed third wife two of the Four Hundred," spoke up one of the men.

Eck's chance came the next day. He was called by the daughter from some heavy work that Beechmere told him must be done by noon—tho Eck knew it could not be done in that time—to unhitch the horses from a carriage-load of merry city folks, and put them away, then to go in and help the cook prepare some extra vegetables for dinner.

Eck brought up the vegetables and placed them ready and within reach of the cook, after which he went to the bunkhouse, and after washing very clean and donning his best suit, he packed his valise and made ready to take dinner with the family at one o'clock, as the would-be lady daughter considered it quite a disgrace to have dinner at high noon, the time the workmen were dining. Her father, after some severe lectures on her part, consented to this the few times he allowed her to have company, for Clark Beechmere had not made his money by entertaining people of any kind. Only fools wasted money in feasting people, he tried to impress upon his daughter.

Eck, dressed in his best clothes, and looking very gentlemanly and handsome, came to the kitchen, and sat down in a chair near the door leading into the dining-room just as the cook was preparing to take up the dinner.

After a wordy struggle with her father before she could make him don a decent coat and suit, Beechmere's daughter ran into the dining-room to give the table a close survey. Catching sight of Eck in his good suit, she clasped her hands and gurgled:

"Oh, you have come to wait upon the table! Who sent you—papa? Of course he did, as the cook would never dare to."

With this she tripped up and laid a linen towel across one of his arms, then ran gleefully back to her guests.

The cook looked at Eck, and smiled, asking: "Did he send you to wait on table?"

"Not that I heard," was the reply.

She seemed to think he was there, and said in a pleasant way:

"There's an extra plate. You might go in and announce that dinner is served."

Eck did as she requested. Then, standing behind a certain chair, he waited until all were seated, when he deliberately seated himself in the chair and waited after unfolding his napkin to be served with the guests.

The cook, after donning a white apron, did the serving, helping Eck as she helped the others, the daughter of the house, in an angry aside, bade her not to do so, and if black looks would kill, those sent Eck's way from the master of the house would have struck him dead.

Eck ate his fill, in a manner, quiet way; he even talked a little with the young lady who sat next him, tho she must have wondered why he was not introduced. When the guests arose from the table Eck arose with them, then waited until all filed out of sight into the parlor, when he turned to face his angry employer, who thundered:

"You are discharged, sir!"

"Oh, no!" Eck coolly answered. "I discharged myself after your daughter called me from the work you had set for me. Here is my time. Give me my money, sir."

"I figure the time myself, sir," was the haughty retort. "I will not accept your figures."

"All right," said Eck. "When I am at home I live as well all of the time as you have this one dinner. I wanted one good square meal from you before I left. You feed your pigs better than your men, and if it were fit for a man there is not by half enough of it. No wonder your hands only stay a short time with you, sir."

After which speech Eck refused to talk further with the man, passing his snapping remarks with silence, and quietly allowing him to hold back one dollar of his wages for the dinner he had eaten.

When he came back to the bunkhouse for his valise, he found the men loafing about, merely to know whether he had succeeded in eating with the family.

"Yes, I got my dinner, boys," Eck told them. "If you'd bet on it I would have won, for I got the best dinner I have had in a long time, but—I paid a dollar for it."

"Hate to see you go, Alexander the Great," spoke up one of the men, and the rest echoed the remark.

"Got to be traveling on, boys. No use me regretting I've got to leave you."

Eck could scarcely express reluctance in leaving them. He distrusted them thoroly, but he would not have allowed them to know it, altho he well guessed that not for one night would he have kept that fifty dollars intact had they known of its existence in the belt he wore day and night.

Looking back, he saw Clark Beechmere on the front veranda. He waved a hand back at the rough man, muttering:

"Too bad I had to do such a thing, and I couldn't have been hired to do it in any sort of a halfway house! But that Sis Hopkins of a daughter! Bah!"

Eck's purpose was definite. He was not going to fool along working or hunting up any more Beechmeres now. He was going to work his way up to Montana, and to the ranch where Douglas Beechmere had last been heard from.

This meant stopping off to work when his money gave out. He had promised his grandfather he would steal no rides. He kept his promise, tho at times he had already found it hard.

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Hopes.

"Your boy Josh keeps practicin' at golf."

"Yes," replied Farmer Corntossel. "I'm encouragin' him all I kin. Maybe he'll work up the muscle an' the proper stroke for swingin' a scythe."

Would Like His Choice.

"You must remember, my boy, that wealth does not bring happiness."

"I don't expect it to. I merely want it so that I may be able to choose the kind of misery that is most agreeable to me."

Foul Weather.

"Beastly weather isn't it?"

"Well, no! The only creature I know of that would like weather we've been having would be a duck. A duck isn't a beast; it's a fowl. Foul weather, I call it; not beastly."

A Well-Filled Purse.

"My purse is always well filled," stated the chronic bachelor, "because it never feels the——"

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Pleasant Dreams	Trustworthy
How it Began	Quick Recovery
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College Days	High Speed Heaver
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Not Enough	Like Father
The Way to Get Rich	Tit for Tat
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His Question	Preliminaries
Father Knows	Poem
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Doubtful Woman	This Way Out
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